

Chronicles

June 1992

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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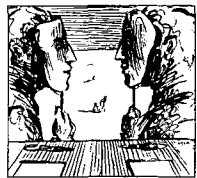
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On 'Southern Manners'

I've just finished reading the second of John Shelton Reed's articles (Letter From the Lower Right, December 1991 and January 1992) praising his own manners, and those of other Southerners. I've encountered this in Southern print before, and it has never failed to annoy me. I was taught that bragging is bad manners, and that public sneers against "outsiders" is provincialism.

There is, of course, a difference between traditional northern and Southern manners. In the upstate New York region where I spent the more important of my formative years, we did not dwell on the fact that it was one of Washington's headquarters during an important period in the War of Independence, nor did we allude to our regional heritage on social occasions.

The best American manners I recall were those exhibited by the northern pre-World War I people, who were genuinely graceful and democratic. Such manners were well represented by FDR, who managed to conceal his innate snobbery with remarkable ease in public, and Hamilton Fish, one of his contemporaries, who more honestly did the same. They were members of my father's generation, and their manners reflected those of *their* fathers. I mention them as representative because both became well-known and many were exposed to their manners. Both my father and my grand-

fathers (one of whom was not an American, but a Scot) had the same ease, and took the same care to not carelessly offend others. In my view, they had the Anglo-American manners of their generation.

In recent decades American manners have shown a deplorable decline, due largely to the influence of various subcultures scornful of earlier traditions and customs. Such changes are also altering the South. Mr. Reed apparently resides in some pocket that time forgot, and writes as if Southern courtesy is still widespread, as in antebellum days. My experience with Southern manners in recent decades has been considerably less pleasant, but I will not follow his example and cite instances. That approach simply exacerbates a sad situation.

—Otto Scott
 Murphys, CA

Mr. Reed Replies:

My intention has always been merely to show that Southern manners are different, not that they're "better." It would be foolish to deny that many Southerners believe that, but others of us are quite ready to acknowledge that courtesy comes in many forms. (See, for instance, Donald Davidson's appreciation of Vermonters, in *Still Rebels, Still Yankees*.) My favorite definition of a gentleman is "one who never gives offense unintentionally," so I apologize to Mr. Scott.

CULTURAL REVOLUTIONS

AN NEA GRANT has been awarded to an "artist" in Utah to erect a monument to the myth of a pre-Roe v. Wade "back-alley" abortion holocaust. Darin Biniaz, a 26 year old who has discovered that "art" is more profitable and less demanding than actual work, has received \$2,000 to create a "sculpture" called "No Choice (No Freedom)." The work will consist of a rust-red 40-foot I beam and a sealed box containing the names of 100 American women who supposedly died as a result of illegal abor-

tions between 1932 and 1989. The "sculpture" will blemish a tract of public land leased to Biniaz by the Bureau of Land Management. Previous works by Biniaz have also dealt with political subjects. Last year he filled a Plexiglas cube with air from Deer Valley and dangled it over a Salt Lake City intersection; a sign informed the public that "The Clean Air Is in the Box." In April he presented a work entitled "No Home for the Brave" about homeless children. These pieces persuaded NEA jurors to

fund the pro-abortion sculpture.

According to Galen McKibben of Montana's Helena Presents (which co-administered Biniarz's grant), the abortion sculpture was found "at the very top" of 160 applications. Juror Casey Jarman of the Salt Lake Arts Council explained that Biniarz's proposal "came at a time when the panel felt it made a strong statement and was worthy of funding." The decision to fund the sculpture came shortly after the Utah legislature, acting with overwhelming support from the state's electorate, passed a restrictive abortion law. The panel decided to subsidize the pro-abortion side of the Utah argument: in principle, anti-abortion Utahns were being taxed to fund a shrine to pro-abortion mythology—a situation of the sort Jefferson defined as the very essence of tyranny.

The names placed in the monument were provided by Susanne Millsaps, who is executive director of Utah's branch of the National Abortion Rights Action League. According to legend, hundreds of thousands of women died at the hands of "back-alley butchers" before the 1973 Roe decision. (For this reason it is significant that some of the names on the handwritten list provided by Millsaps were those of women who obtained abortions after 1973; legalization did not make abortion any safer.) Abortion advocates have borrowed heavily from the language and imagery of holocaust survivors. Signs declaring "Never Again!" are prominent at abortion rights rallies; Utah ACLU director Michelle Parish insists that permitting the state to restrict abortion "would be like allowing Nazi death camps." Through the NEA the federal government has placed its imprimatur upon the pro-abortion legend: the monument will offer tangible testimony of the "truth" of the myth.

Unlike the actual holocaust, the "back-alley holocaust" resides in the realm of historical apocrypha. Marian Faux, author of several books about the abortion debate, observes that "When I began to look into [illegal] abortion, several pro-choice reformers suggested that illegal abortion was not as dangerous as it had been depicted during the reform movement. Admittedly, an image of tens of thousands of women being maimed or killed each year by illegal abortion was so persuasive a piece of propaganda that the movement could be forgiven for its failure to double-check the facts." In fact, according to Faux, "women [were]

probably better off in the hands of competent but 'illegal' abortionists who did hundreds of the minor surgeries every week than with the family doctor who did one abortion a year."

Writing in the *Progressive*, Linda Rocawich strives to make vivid the "reality" of "back-alley abortions" for those "women and men who are too young to remember what we women did before January 22, 1973." She offers testimonies taken from a handful of women who obtained illegal abortions before Roe, but insists that "each individual included here stands in for the thousands of others like

her." The stories shared by Rocawich actually continue the work of debunking the pro-abortion mythology. With the exception of one terrifying story of a woman who beat herself into a miscarriage, the vignettes offered by Rocawich are not particularly unpleasant. "Carol" obtained an abortion in 1966 at the hands of a Cuban physician; the procedure was performed in a "child's room, just like every little girl always wanted. Pretty white bedspread, frilly curtain, stuffed animals. And it was clean. Really clean." The procedure was competently performed: "There were no complications, a little cramping is all."



In spite of all this, Rocawich insists that "Carol's safe, illegal abortion was still a horrifying experience." "Deborah" obtained an abortion in 1967 from "a trained physician" with a legitimate practice in a city in the Midwest. "Deborah" says that her abortion "was not painful . . . I don't remember pain." "Barbara" had an abortion in Philadelphia in the 1960's. "Barbara's" abortion had to be certified a "therapeutic" procedure by a psychiatrist. "I had to break down and cry. Say my life will be ruined," recalled "Barbara." In short order she admitted that she had "embellished" her story, "but not by much." (Her embellishments are indeed trivial when compared with the mendacities routinely wrought by the abortion-rights movement.)

Rocawich's roster of victims includes Kathryn Marshall, a woman who was raped in Dallas in 1971. Marshall didn't become pregnant, but we are asked to consider her a victim because abortions were illegal in 1971 and she insists that she would have gotten an illegal abortion. "Ginnie," a young woman who went to Canada to receive an abortion, is also mentioned by Rocawich. In all, her parade of horrors includes one woman who forced herself to miscarry, four women who received safe, clean, illegal abortions, and one woman who never became pregnant. If these stories are representative of "thousands" of others, where are all the victims?

Elements of the pro-abortion movement are laboring to create victims. "Menstrual extraction," a technique of early self-abortion described by writer Charlotte Allen as "a fad of the early 1970's bra-burning days," is being taught once again. Part of the "back-alley holocaust" legend has it that many women died after being driven to self-abortion. But Salt Lake City gynecologist (and abortionist) Grant Bagley maintains that "menstrual extraction, as it is being taught by women's groups, is as safe as a legal abortion performed at the same stage of pregnancy." If this is true, another element of the "back-alley holocaust" myth is exposed as a fabrication. If it is untrue, Bagley and the feminists who are instructing women in self-abortion techniques are culpably indifferent with regard to the health and safety of women.

The efforts of Bagley and his ideological kindred may indeed produce a stream of victims, and the NEA will sustain the efforts of "artists" like Biniaz to canonize such victims as martyrs in the

struggle against the "patriarchy." Surely the same First Amendment that is regularly tortured into forbidding the public display of Judeo-Christian symbols should prohibit the public subsidy of pro-abortion mythology.

—William N. Grigg

NEOCONSERVATIVE Republican Governor John Engler of Michigan inherited a \$1.1 billion budget deficit from his predecessor, moderate Democrat James Blanchard, when he took office last January 1, 1991. Engler eked out a narrow 17,595-vote victory over Blanchard by promising relief from Michigan's burdensome property tax structure, fourth highest in the United States, to Reagan Democrats in middle-class areas like Macomb County and Downriver Detroit. To balance the state budget and reduce property taxes, Engler proposed spending cuts, including abolition of all state funding for the arts, action that would have made Michigan unique among the 50 states.

Engler's proposal raised a maelstrom of opposition from artists receiving state subsidies and others on the cultural left. Leon Cohan, chairman of the Michigan Council for the Arts, termed the proposal to abolish state funding "a mishmash of semi-intellectual, reactionary baloney." Sam Sachs II, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, said the action tended to confirm the state-subsidized art community's suspicions that "yahoos are taking over." Nancy Malitz, arts critic for the "Accent" section of the *Detroit News*, a poor would-be imitation of the "Style" section of the *Washington Post*, framed the proposal as proof "of an anti-intellectual attitude that makes people uneasy about the arts as a form of expression." This is a problem limited to America, Malitz complained, not Europe, where state-subsidized artists are treated as "visionaries."

The anti-Engler frenzy built into a crescendo on May 1, when one thousand demonstrators staged an "arts attack" at the state capitol in Lansing against the proposal. Much of their anger was directed at D. Joseph Olson, an Engler supporter, attorney, and insurance executive who serves as a director of the Lansing Symphony Orchestra. In an adversarial column entitled "Arts Ogres' and Killer Bees," Olson characterized arts subsidy-seekers as "killer bees . . . driven not by reason but by some instinctive urge to attack anyone who disturbs the hive and to sting and

sting again." Cultural leftists attacked Olson and Engler as "fire-breathing," "misguided zealots" adhering to a "stringently ideological, shortsighted anti-arts policy."

Despite the rhetorical onslaught, Engler signed an executive order abolishing the Michigan Council for the Arts. On May 1, the Republican-controlled Senate failed to overturn Engler's order, despite the "arts attack" surrounding the capitol. Under Blanchard and liberal Republican William Milliken, the arts council was subsidizing rich areas at the expense of the poor and middle class. Public records show the MCA distributed more than one-third of its grants between 1981 and 1986 to artists in Oakland and Washtenaw counties, Michigan's wealthiest two counties on a per capita basis and home to less than one in seven state residents. Artists in 24 of Michigan's 25 counties did not receive any grants from the MCA during the same five-year period. MCA funding for the Cranbrook Academy of Arts and related facilities increased 742 percent from \$45,900 in 1975 to \$340,582 in 1990, while inflation rose only 239 percent. Famous as liberal commentator Michael Kinsley's alma mater, Cranbrook also has the distinction of being in Bloomfield Hills, which has the highest per capita income in the state.

Engler responded to these powerful class arguments as any neoconservative Republican might. He caved in to Republican plutocrats who support state funding for the arts and reinstated "temporary" tax dollars for three years to fund a new Michigan arts council. "The governor doesn't mind seeing money for capital improvements or structural improvements and maintenance," spokesman John Truscott said after Engler met privately on August 7 with subsidy-seekers, including Republican billionaire A. Alfred Taubman, who controls Sotheby's, an international auction house. The *Detroit News* said Engler emerged from the meeting "looking like a man who had been taken to the woodshed." Or a bank.

Engler threw a bone to critics and named Olson to the new MCA board, action that Cohan compared to "putting a fox in the chicken coop." He need not worry. Engler's tax-cut plan provides only palpable property tax relief for Macomb County and Downriver Detroit, and he has begun to bitterly attack the press for his own handler's incompetence. The smart money in Lansing is that Engler will become a one-term governor in 1994, just in time to make his "temporary" rein-

statement of the council “permanent.” Except for Olson, all of Engler’s appointees to the new council are statist, and include Shahida Mausi, director of the Detroit Council for the Arts and an evaluator for the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1990, Mausi’s deputy, James Hart, penned this remarkable statement in *City Arts Quarterly*, subsidized by tax dollars from Joe and Josephine Six-Pack in Macomb and Downriver: “In the terrific street-level noise of a synchronic cultural clash, the bump and, yes, sometimes blood of multi-racial conflict is the whisper of this new multi-cultural polis.”

This polis, Hart says, is “Anti-Pater-nalistic, Anti-Racist, Anti-Sexist, Anti-Colonial, Anti-Imperialist, with long-held questions about essentialist naturalism and the natural unity of biology.” To date, Engler has not given any indication that he understands the statement’s significance, although I’m sure Irving Kristol would.

—Greg Kaza

POLLY WILLIAMS, a black Democrat in Wisconsin, has been hailed by the *Wall Street Journal*, *Reason*, and other neoconservative organs for her school choice legislation. And the Wisconsin Supreme Court has approved it: under-class public school students can now get more welfare, in this case free tuition, at “nonsectarian” private schools. Neo-conservative choicers hail the decision and the program, which may be expanded to include religious schools, but no real conservative should support it. Choice will destroy the independence—the essence—of private schools.

In almost all public schools today, parents fit into one of two categories: superfluous or “troublemaker.” They have no control or even influence over what their children are taught, even if it contradicts their religious or other deeply held beliefs. Parents can complain about the teaching of promiscuity in and out of the classroom, about condom handouts, rampant schoolyard theft, sex in the bathrooms, leftist economics, anti-Western history, made-up multiculturalism, and dumbed-down textbooks, but it will have no effect except to single out them and their kids as troublemakers.

Private schools offer an escape from all this, and a real education besides. But for how long? Schools that accept even one vouchered student will find their curricula, admissions, academic standards,

and disciplinary codes subject to detailed regulation from the Department of Education and the various civil rights agencies. Frank R. Kemerer, an education law professor at the University of North Texas, points out in *Education Week* that private schools have long had to fight for their independence. The Supreme Court in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* in 1925 ruled that bureaucrats can “inspect, supervise, and examine” private schools and “their teachers and pupils” to make sure that “studies plainly essential to good citizenship” are taught and that teachings “inimical to the public welfare” are barred. A decade ago, the Supreme Court reaffirmed *Pierce* when it upheld Nebraska’s shutdown of a Christian school and jailing of its principal, who was also pastor of the local church. His crime? He had used parents as teachers. They were smart, motivated, and hardworking, but they didn’t have state licenses. Religious freedom, said the court, is irrelevant when it comes to state regulation of education, one of the most inherently religious of all activities.

All this has happened without government funding. How bad will it get with vouchers? One precedent, says Kemerer, is HUD’s voucher program. As soon as a landlord accepts a tenant with a rent voucher, he is subject to an incredible array of federal regulations telling him to whom he can rent, at what price, for how long, under what conditions, how much upkeep he must do regardless of tenant vandalism, and when and if he can cancel the lease. Economics professor Estelle James of the State University of New York, Stony Brook, has studied school vouchers all over the world and found the same pattern. Whether in Holland, France, Belgium, or any other country she examined, private schools that accepted vouchers invariably became semipublic.

In the United States, school choice will mean that private schools can’t offer distinctive curriculums. Christian and Jewish schools will have to water down their doctrinal teachings and even eliminate classroom prayer and religious symbols, exactly as did the Catholic colleges that earlier took federal pottage. All-girl schools may have to include boys, and certainly all-boy schools will have to include girls. Religious schools will have to accept militant atheists. Just as the Civil Rights Act of 1991 makes it illegal for companies to use hiring or promotion tests that have a “disparate” impact on minorities—meaning those that don’t yield a racial-

ly proportionate result—private schools will be accused of discrimination unless their admissions, scholarship, and honors programs are ethnically equalized. Even discipline will have to be administered on a quota basis. Hillsdale College has found that it cannot accept even one federally financed student without being subjected to the full panoply of federal social engineering. It would be no different with primary and secondary schools.

There are other reasons to oppose school choice. Despite claims of competition among public schools, it can’t create—any more than Gorbachev could—a free market in a socialized industry. By allowing vouchers to be used at the few decent public schools, it can make them like all the rest. And it will cost a bundle: President Bush has \$500 million in his new budget “to support this growing movement.” The neoconservatives—statists like Bill Bennett, Francis Fukuyama, and Ben Wattenberg—advocate centralized education because they want to construct the “first universal nation.” That means destroying the reactionary opposition: thus the drive to deracinate our private schools.

As American education has become more centralized, it has also become more left-wing, more dim-witted, and more antiparent. Only one small area of freedom remains: the private school, now under attack through “choice.” Polly Williams is a member of Milwaukee’s Black Militia, an armed group which last year threatened death to whites if it didn’t get \$600 million. Do we need to know anything else about choice and those who advocate it?

—Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr.

ANTI-SEMITISM, said August Bebel, was the “socialism of fools.” Murray Rothbard has responded similarly to the reckless imputation of anti-Semitic motives by neoconservatives and their clients, saying that “Anti-anti-Semitism has become the conservatism of fools.” The non-responsiveness of journalists and intellectuals to the gentile-bashing of Alan Dershowitz suggests that the problem underlined by Professor Rothbard goes well beyond neoconservative America. Public tolerance of Dershowitz as an angry victim of white Christian society may be a measure of American willingness to put up with anything lest one be seen as insensitive. Watching Dershowitz on television and then reading his autobiogra-

phy *Chutzpah*, I was struck by his deft manipulation of a particular image, that of an aggrieved member of an immeasurably victimized group, the victimization of which is somehow the inexplicable fault of white heterosexual Christian males. Curiously, it is never made clear who the victim is. It is not all Jews, for Dershowitz vents his contempt on German Jews and on those of his coreligionists who made it in America before him and whose names do not seem, at least to his ear, sufficiently Jewish. In fact, the only Jews he would admit as fellow victims are those who share his unutterable indignation against goyim and who support the present Israeli settlement policy on the West Bank. Dershowitz insists that the displacement of Palestinians is a "fifth-rate human rights issue" and that any criticism of that policy is only a mask for anti-Semitism or Jewish self-hate. Not surprisingly, he does support continued sanctions against the government of South Africa.

Another criterion of being an authentic Jew, for Dershowitz, is the willingness to embrace gay rights as a Jewish concern. In *Chutzpah* we learn that, unlike Poles who were "selectively murdered" by the Nazis, homosexuals were genuine victims of Nazi genocide. Homosexuals also shared the Jewish fate of being marginalized, again unlike the Poles who are presented as Nazi accomplices. Unfortunately, for this exercise in political correctness, Hitler killed two million Polish Catholics, a far greater number of victims than one can reasonably come up with for liquidated gays. Besides, unlike Polish Catholics, homosexuals swelled the ranks of the early Nazi movement, particularly the SA. The most important Nazi filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl, was a crusading lesbian and celebrant of black Africa.

But Dershowitz's book is not about facts, any more than *Mein Kampf*. It is an extended diabolization in which, as in Hitler's ravings, the victimizer stands out always more clearly than the victim. And the victimizer is whomever Dershowitz happens to dislike and decides to present as an anti-Semite. When he comes to black anti-Semitism, he dismisses it as based on misunderstanding about the causes of discrimination. Jesse Jackson, by definition, cannot be an anti-Semite, because he is not an American white Protestant, Polish Catholic, or a member of any other group that Dershowitz sets out to diabolize. One is also impressed

by the sweeping character of the condemnations. WASPdom is relegated to the outer reaches of perdition because Dershowitz felt socially uncomfortable as a law student at Yale and because no establishment firm gave him a job upon graduation. Former students of mine have expressed the same complaints against Eastern European Jewish liberals who only hire their own kind in law firms and universities. Are they, too, justified in venting their hate in print—or in reaching for the Aryan equivalent of *Chutzpah*?

Having known real holocaust victims, it is doubtful that Dershowitz and his self-pitying friends have shared their fate. Those real victims know the difference between murderous thugs and Episcopalian law professors who may or may not have snubbed the abrasive Dershowitz on an elevator. Nor did our self-proclaimed hero suffer continuing degradation at the hands of American Christians, many of whose families fought against Nazi Germany. To the contrary, Dershowitz has benefited conspicuously from American Christian society, far more than yours truly who nonetheless thanks this country for giving his father refuge from real, not imaginary, Nazis. Reading Dershowitz I was reminded of the rhetorical question posed by Joe McCarthy in what I would like to believe was a sober moment: Why have those born with silver spoons in their mouths repaid this country so badly? Though Dershowitz worked for that silver spoon by putting those he knew were murderers back onto the streets, it seems in any case that America did well by him. Certainly he could not have come so far from his humble Brooklyn origins if American gentiles were even half as prejudiced as he suggests. Invariably he skirts this issue by praising America as an open-ended or deconstructed First Amendment or as something being resocialized by the Anti-Defamation League. Yet it is still a predominantly Christian Western country that puts up with him and rewards his insults with money.

My own sense of things is that Dershowitz would clean up his act if goyim were not such wimps. If American Christians and American Jews tried to build a relationship on mutual respect, Dershowitz would be forced to confine himself to professional activities. Though it is hoped that a less permissive criminal law system would deprive him of that option as well, he may be less offensive in the classroom or courtroom than as a

victimological autobiographer.

—Paul Gottfried

PRESIDENT BUSH'S 1993 budget called for additional reductions in defense spending totaling \$50 billion over five years. Liberal members of Congress immediately sharpened their knives to make even larger cuts. Bush's recommendations in regard to nuclear weapons were sensible. Termination of the B-2 bomber and Midgetman ICBM programs was justified, as both were far too expensive for the capabilities provided. The "build-down" of existing long-range missiles and warheads is to proceed over the rest of the decade in tandem with the dismantling of Russia's offensive systems.

However, four-fifths of the Pentagon budget goes for conventional forces. Despite the attention paid to the nuclear arms race, it is still the traditional combat services that do the real fighting and on which the United States depends for power projection and the active defense of its overseas interests. The move away from nuclear arms is not just because the danger of an ideological struggle for world domination has waned. Nuclear weapons have been shown to have limited value in extended deterrence or as a tool of world politics.

The 1993 budget indicated a shift in Bush administration priorities from previous budgets. The earlier five-year defense plan incorporated into the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of October 1990 called for a massive reduction in conventional forces in order to keep funds available for nuclear systems. Now the ax has been turned on the strategic systems with Bush warning that he will not accept deeper cuts in conventional forces. This new scheme makes more sense, but it will be surprising if Bush can (or even tries very hard to) block further moves in Congress towards conventional disarmament. The disarmers claim that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States has a surplus in military capability, particularly in "European-oriented" ground and air forces, which it is alleged the country cannot afford because of the budget crisis. However, neither the facts nor experience supports such a conclusion.

The size of the military is commonly exaggerated. The United States never built up to the levels required to meet the country's global Cold War commitments. In 1982 these requirements were set by

the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a peacetime establishment of 23 active Army divisions, four Marine amphibious forces, 24 Navy carrier groups, and 30 active Air Force tactical fighter wings. Even if President Reagan's complete program had been implemented, force levels would not have reached these goals. Active forces peaked at 18 Army divisions, three Marine amphibious forces, 14 carrier groups, and 24 fighter wings. The Army peaked at 770,000 men in 1989, still far below the 950,000 it had in 1964, the last year of peace before Vietnam. The Reagan program modernized American forces, but the Pentagon never recovered the numerical strength it lost during the malaise of the 1970's. Now the Army is to be cut to 500,000 men.

During the Persian Gulf War the Army's crack "heavy divisions" were shipped from Germany to Saudi Arabia along with other units earmarked for NATO. Over 223,000 reservists were called to the colors. This indicates that the United States does not have a post-Cold War "military surplus." Throughout the Cold War, troops deployed to face the Soviets were used for a variety of other missions.

Yet defense cuts are proceeding as if the Persian Gulf War never took place. By 1995 the Army will lose six divisions, the Navy two carrier groups, and the Air Force nine fighter wings. The Armed Services will lose 25 percent of their personnel. Counting civilian Defense Department employees, over one million people will leave the military establishment. What this means was stated by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney: "If you take all of the force that's deployed in support of Operation Desert Storm . . . that's a little over 500,000 people. We're going to take a force of that size out of the United States military over the next five years."

Production lines for aircraft and heavy weapons are shutting down in an industrial sector where the number of firms engaged in defense work was already shrinking. It will be very difficult to (in current jargon) "reconstitute" the nation's fighting forces. In their 1991 *Joint Net Assessment* the Joint Chiefs estimated that by 1997 "it would take two to four years to restore production capability to 1990 levels for items whose lines have gone cold." And 1990 was a year of peacetime production levels after real defense spending had already been falling for four years. To make the current plan look reasonable, the administration is assuming that the

United States will have two years of "strategic warning" before anything dangerous happens. Apparently future enemies are expected to be very cooperative.

Defense Secretary Cheney says, "What we have presented here is a force that we think is the absolute minimum, irreducible capability that we have to have in order to defend the United States—under certain positive assumptions." Congress, though, sees the plan not as a minimum but as a starting point for more cuts. Yet the demands of war are always greater than anticipated even when realistic rather than "positive" assumptions are used.

For example, in 1979, the Pentagon drew up a plan for combating an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. It was thought that four Army divisions (two mechanized and two airborne), three Marine brigades, and three aircraft carriers would be required. When the real situation materialized, the United States sent seven Army divisions (three armored, two mechanized, and two airborne), two marine divisions, and six aircraft carriers plus the equivalent of a dozen Air Force fighters and a host of support units including armored cavalry and extra artillery—a force more than triple what was originally planned. Even this was not considered sufficient. Forces from Britain, France, and various Arab states were also called upon. Nearly half the conventional military might of the United States was needed to confront one Third World despot. The notion that the United States only needs a small "contingency army" should have been buried in the desert. But the notion persists because it serves those who want to raid the Pentagon budget. Whether the objective is to buy votes through "middle-class tax cuts" or to nationalize the health insurance industry, whenever anyone raises the question of where the money is to come from, the answer is "the peace dividend."

Liberals see defense as the only place in a budget of over \$1.5 trillion where extra money can be found for new social programs. Yet fiscal exigency cannot provide the rationale for American disarmament on the scale contemplated. The five-year plan adopted in the 1990 budget agreement cut \$246.4 billion from the prior July 1990 baseline projection for 1991-1995 defense spending. Yet this represents only 3 percent of estimated total federal spending during this period. Bush's new cuts will not make much difference to the overall budget even if doubled as the Democrats want, but they will

do substantial damage to the Pentagon. The reduction in military capability is thus disproportionately large given the meager fiscal benefits. And no money will be "saved." It will all be spent elsewhere.

Over the next five years, defense spending will fall from about 20 percent of the budget to 15 percent. In 1992 the budget deficit was larger than the entire Pentagon budget. In contrast major domestic programs are expanding at double-digit rates. It is clear that the military is neither the cause nor the solution of the government's money problems.

By 1996 defense spending will represent less than 3.5 percent of the GNP, the lowest level since 1948. A great many American soldiers paid for this earlier bout of parsimony with their lives when the Korean War broke out in 1950. Wars are fought, at least initially, with the forces built during the prior decade. Can anyone really be so optimistic as to place such a heavy bet on there not being a war on the scale of Korea or the Gulf during the next twenty years?

The 1990's have started out as a very violent decade. Conflicts are brewing throughout the world as new power centers and economic capabilities are created, providing the means to carry out old feuds as well as new ambitions. A failure to provide military forces commensurate with America's global interests will cost far more than money. It will cost lives in a future war that the United States might not find as easy to win as in the Gulf.

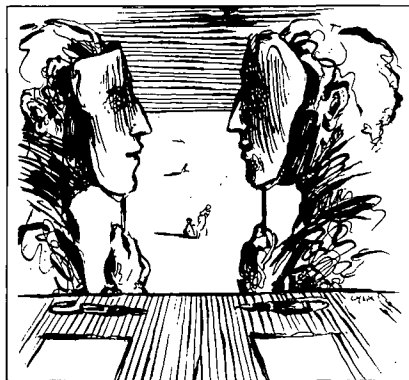
Disarmament programs are no more viable in the 1990's than they were in the 1920's and 1930's when another era of supposed peace turned out to be merely another interwar period. President Bush seems bent on following the dismal examples of the Republican administrations of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. Then, as now, in the name of peace, arms control, and fiscal restraint the military was dropped to such a low level that it was unprepared for the next set of challenges and thus invited war. Only the President's continued support for missile defense systems shows any regard for reality.

Since the left actively promotes disarmament, it is up to conservatives who understand the lessons of history to champion the abiding value of a strong military. The failure of the conservative movement to do so bodes ill for the nation's future security.

—William R. Hawkins

Leveraged Buyout

by Thomas Fleming



“Every nation has the government it deserves.” Joseph de Maistre’s hard saying can give small comfort to Americans. Oh, it is true, we have a paper Constitution that promises a republican form of government, but all three branches of that government have for several generations conspired to evacuate the republican content from the system, leaving only a decorative and ceremonial shell of elections without issues, ghost-written speeches, and congressmen haranguing an empty chamber for the benefit of C-Span cameramen. The United States is a republic in the same sense that Great Britain is a monarchy. In theory, the Queen might declare a dissolution and summon new ministers more to her liking, but the attempt would bring her unfortified palace down around Her Majesty’s ears. Over here, it is the people who reign without ruling.

Whatever our form of government might be in principle, the real American system has little in common with the republic of our not-so-distant ancestors. If there is any doubt of this, we have only to consider the apparently inverse relationship between the quality of leadership and the quantity of power. In the beginning we elected Washington, Adams, and Jefferson but refused to grant them even a fraction of the power we cheerfully surrender to Jimmy Carter and George Bush.

It is not so much the form of government that defines a nation as the character of its governors. *The Leaders We Deserve* was the title of a provocative book by Alistair Mant, who describes bad leaders as men (typically) who cannot conceive of any value or significance beyond their own personal victories. They have learned, since early childhood, when to attack and when to flee, and they are bound by no loyalty to principle or institution. The Lyndon Johnsons and Margaret Thatchers, he argues, may be kind to those who serve them, but they are incapable of laughing at themselves, because they have no criterion beyond their own personal success. Such people do not become political leaders except in countries where the entire leadership class is dominated by such personality types.

In symbolic terms, our own ruling elite consists of George Bush (assisted and mirrored by James Baker, William Bennett, Newt Gingrich, and GOP chairman Rich Bond) on the Republican side; and Bill Clinton and/or Paul Tsongas among the Democrats. That we have sunk so far from the republic of Washington and Jefferson is no occasion for wonder—“All human things are sub-

ject to decay”—but that we fall so short of the glories of Grover Cleveland and Calvin Coolidge, that is the festering wound in our national conscience.

What a contest it will be, assuming Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton receive their parties’ nominations. Unlike George Bush, Clinton is not even a credible imitation of a man. “Governor Elvis,” as he is sometimes known in his home state, is too cute for words, the Peter Jennings of politics, an Al Gore with the common touch, a male model who knows how to flirt and leer at the audiences that even he must despise for their gullibility. Bill Clinton is a very familiar type to those of us who went to college in the 1960’s: the well-dressed frat boy who is already planning his political career. (Isn’t that the real significance of his letter to the National Guard?)

A politician with a program to cure every human ill, Clinton only lacks a principle with which he can connect up all the little dots of his policies. Selected as his party’s dream candidate, a Southern moderate, Clinton has oriented his entire campaign toward keeping Jesse Jackson’s Rainbow Coalition within the Democratic Party. Even George Bush, the feeblest Republican candidate since Wendell Willkie, not excepting Gerald Ford whom he so much resembles, even George Bush ought to be able to mop up the floor with him, especially when more of the governor’s rejected mistresses come back to haunt him.

Mr. Tsongas, it must be said, is both more intelligent and more honest than the front-runner, but are we ready for a moralizing prig who made his money as a lobbyist? Tsongas does have the ability to laugh at himself, but that is one more sign of his superiority over lesser men. Jerry Brown, for my money, is the best of the lot: smart, clearheaded, and brave enough to tell America the truth about itself, that we no longer have the best Congress money can buy. If we must have social democracy, then we would be better off under Brown, who promises something like German efficiency in the service of Catholic social thought, than under either of the more prominent liberal candidates, Clinton and Bush.

Mr. Bush, to his credit, makes a good impression on foreigners who do not speak English. He wears his clothes well, and unlike Clinton who can never shut off his coprophagous grin, the President knows how to appear grave on serious occasions. Unfortunately, he is another Monroe—Marilyn, not James—who

can manage to keep up appearances until he ventures to say something that is not written down for him. Next to his pleasant appearance, George Bush's other virtue is his fidelity to one of his party's oldest principles, the conviction that the country belongs exclusively to those who can afford to buy it. When his sons are accused of insider trading or profiting from an S&L swindle, the President is honestly baffled. Isn't that how everyone makes his money?

Mr. Bush's reelection hopes are pinned on the support of loyal Republicans, a class of Americans even more mule-headed than the yellow-dog Democrats who refuse to vote for the party of Grant and Sherman. To the true Republican stalwart, nothing matters but his party's control of the White House—and the patronage that goes with it. They may agree with Pat Buchanan's message, but they are afraid to vote for him, lest they split the party and hand the election over to the Democrats, as if there were principled differences between the Bush and Carter regimes. In fact, Bush's New World Order internationalism is the craziest of Carter's policies, but we used to be able to blame that kind of one-worldism on liberal Democrats. Pat Buchanan is fighting an uphill battle in his crusade to reform the Republican Party. The first man to make the attempt, James Garfield, was shot by a disgruntled stalwart, and the party's leadership is filled with would-be Charles Guiteaus.

Nothing so reveals the character of the regime as the campaign carried out against Patrick Buchanan. A devoted Republican and loyal servant of two Republican presidents, Buchanan was attacked as an anti-Semite by A.M. Rosenthal and William Buckley (who later attempted to explain away his slander), as a fascist by Charles Krauthammer and William Bennett who also accused him of appealing to the "worst angels" of the American character, and as another David Duke by Rich Bond and Newt Gingrich. So much for conservatism's Big Tent or the 11th commandment of the GOP.

Pat Buchanan's importance as a challenge to the liberal-conservative/Republican-Democratic regime can be measured by the nastiness of the assault upon his character, and it is not too much to describe the conservatives who piled on as lackeys of that regime. But the fault does not lie with the Bennetts and Rosenthals—utterly implausible public figures who could not have taken in our same ancestors who paid extra to see Barnum's Egress—but with the party that tolerates them and an American people who have forgotten the use of tar and feathers.

The standard line from the liberal-conservatives is that our institutions need reforming. Cut taxes, tame Congress, trim the fat from the budget, dismantle the EPA, and it will be morning again in America. But the acceptability of George Bush and his mercenaries cannot be blamed exclusively upon our institutions. There is something wrong with the character of a people who cannot look at a David Duke or Newt Gingrich or Bill Clinton and read their character in an instant. "A man of fifty," observed a Republican stalwart of an earlier generation, "is responsible for his face," and our current crop of leaders in both parties is a parade of Dorian Gray pictures illustrating the Seven Deadly Sins.

The relationship between a nation's character and its institutions is not simple. Nations, as much as species, evolve by adapting themselves to conditions that are, to some extent, of their own devising. According to what is called the "gene-culture theory" of E.O. Wilson and Charles Lumsden, certain human qualities proved to be useful "in the beginning." Individuals

endowed with superior agility, intelligence, cooperativeness were more likely to do well in the competition for resources and mates. Cultural forms were gradually devised to take advantage of these aptitudes, and these forms themselves served to filter out individuals who lacked the requisite skills: a population of NFL players, for example, might not have much use for baseball pitchers, tennis players, and lyric poets, especially if they were in a race for the Super Bowl.

The same processes are at work in the evolution of human societies, although in this case the limited time involved usually (but not always) would preclude anything like major genetic changes. A rough new world, for example, will naturally attract a high proportion of adventurers, misfits, malcontents, and ne'er-do-wells, who will form customs and institutions compatible with their characters. More settled conditions will inevitably begin to favor the fortunes of shopkeepers and organization men, but an open and expanding frontier will enable the more adventurous souls to shake off the fetters of town life and light out for the territories, and the history of America is a ceaseless process of dissolution and creation, as families pulled up stakes and moved west. Besides, many of those who stayed behind were only half tame, living on farms and in backcountry settlements.

The social and political institutions of such a country will naturally take a different turn, away from the Old World's settled habits of conformity and dependence. The Church of England might be established in the Carolinas and even take root in the Low Country areas, but Henry Woodward, a truculent Anglican minister of the 18th century, tells a miserable tale of the contumacious and ribald backcountry settlers who acknowledged no authority but their own. The Constitution ultimately adopted by the 13 seceding colonies was a compromise between the British conception of order, promoted by the Adamses and Pinckneys, and the near anarchy espoused by the most fervent Jeffersonians.

In the long run, however, it was the Federalist (falsely named) conception of order that prevailed. Some blame the triumph of government over the people on the process of modernization, but there is a universal tendency for all those in authority to increase their own power at the expense of any rival, whether that rival be another branch or lower level of government, another estate of the realm, or the citizenry themselves. Despite the revolutions of Jefferson and Jackson, and—on a lower level—of Harding and Coolidge, the centralization of power, which began with John Marshall's appointment to the Supreme Court, never really slackened its pace.

But the concentration of power is not an autonomous process; it is parasitical and feeds upon the body politic. Politicians cannot simply seize power, not if they wish to hold on to it; they must buy it, by bribing, one after another, the classes and interests that can be expected to support the regime. From the beginning, Hamilton planned to use the nation's borrowing power as bait to attract the commercial interests, and Henry Clay's Whigs and Lincoln's Republicans structured tariffs, jiggered freight rates, manipulated the sale of public lands, and granted monopolies and franchises in a time-honored strategy for enriching their supporters at the expense of the nation.

These devices are no worse than the stratagems of European monarchs who sold peerages and patents to raise revenues and reward followers, but democracy opens much broader vistas for corruption, and allows the many to take part in the vices of the few. Once upon a time, only the very rich (or the very poor)

could afford such luxuries as adultery, divorce, gambling. Today, it is well within the reach of any hardware dealer to spend a week at a "business convention" in Vegas with a side-trip to the Mustang Ranch and write the whole thing off on his taxes.

Throughout this century, the leaders of the American regime have attempted to be all things to all people: defense contracts for business, social security for the working classes, welfare programs and affirmative racial discrimination for the poor. Potential troublemakers—intellectuals and artists—have been bought off with academic jobs and federal grants.

Government assistance is an addition that saps the moral vitality of the recipients. What begins as a bad habit in which a free man might choose to indulge from time to time turns into a demon that subverts the will and enslaves the mind of the possessed. We were once a free people with distinctive, if somewhat limited, virtues, but we have conspired with our would-be masters to construct the institutions of the servile state. Can a servile population, such as ours, restore the institutions of a free republic? Probably not, although there may be a significant minority who would like to give it a try.

Revolutions, despite the textbook versions of history we learn in school, are not made by the masses. Neither the Jacobins nor the Bolsheviks, neither the Fascists nor the Nazis, represented the opinion of the majority. If a hard-core movement could be formed out of the elements supporting Mr. Buchanan's bid for the Republican nomination, it might well possess sufficient resources and momentum for a social and political transformation that goes well beyond the misnamed Reagan Revolution.

I am addressing my remarks, now, exclusively to people who have the courage of their convictions. It is worth the effort, even to reason with the misguided souls who honestly support George Bush or his Democratic alter egos. But it is a waste of breath speaking to the self-styled conservative Republicans who support the President: they are like sheep, frisking and gamboling on the way to the slaughter house. They marvel at the modern elegance of their new home, comparing it favorably with the barns and pastures of their youth, and they are particularly impressed by the meat-processing machinery—real state-of-the-art stuff. They are embarrassed to think of all those years they spent exposed to the wind and the rain.

There are still some conservatives who do not have the sense to come in out of the rain, who prefer a life of principled independence out in the cold or back in the fever swamp. Some of them, watching the antics of their "allies" on the right are beginning to wonder if we are so corrupt as a nation that we do not deserve to enjoy—could not enjoy if it were handed to us—republican liberty. The truth is that in any nation, it is only a minority that can enjoy the blessings of liberty. Most men are made to lick the boots of their oppressors, and the classical republicanism of the 18th century was the creed of aristocrats. The real American experiment was our attempt to share those blessings with a large part, perhaps even a majority of the population. But any good thing may lose its value if shared too broadly. A spirited horse, harnessed to a cab or a hay wagon, will lose his character, and there are few men who would share their girlfriends and wives with even their best friends.

When we speak of "restoring the republic," we cannot mean the immediate reconstruction of republican institutions for every man, woman, and illegal immigrant who happens to be re-

siding somewhere between Canada and Mexico. The first task is the repair and reempowerment of a class of citizens who will take their responsibilities seriously. The Roman civil and military aristocracy of the imperial period constituted such a class, as did the gentlemen—broadly defined—who created and administered the British Empire.

The task seems, on the face of it, impossible. All the institutions that form the American character—schools, churches, the press, the arts—are responsible for the currently dilapidated state of our morals and manners. Give your son all the advantages of wealth and position—the Episcopal Church, good prep schools, and four years at Yale—and he comes out George Bush. In the short run, at least, we have to write off the great institutions and the current class of leaders being produced by them.

The only elements from which the next elite class can be constructed are the various religious and cultural sects that have attempted to secede from the main stream: some Baptist and Lutheran groups as well as various other evangelical and fundamentalist denominations, antimodern communitarians, maverick individualists. What do these people have in common? On the surface very little, although I have run into a 60's hippie who turned Christian and is now a leader in the Christian home schooling movement. Two things have to happen in order to forge a new republican class out of such disparate elements. First, each of these groups has to straighten out its own house. My limited observation of conservative religious groups has not been encouraging. The laymen are, by and large, good solid people, but the clergy are almost unbelievably ignorant, and their ignorance makes them easy prey for any political or cultural fad that is not positively excluded by the Bible. I have seen, very recently, a paean to Afrocentric education in a publication of the Lutheran Church Wisconsin Synod. "It seems like the end of the world," one church member said. The tougher, more sectarian groups may do a better job of preserving the primitive faith than the main-line churches, but their contempt for civilization makes me shudder at the prospects for a Christian America. Once upon a time, Calvinist and Methodist preachers were serious and educated men, and it is up to Christian communities to insist upon preachers that are both learned and virile.

Internal reform is a long-term process. In the short run, there must be a small and disciplined class of leaders with the energy and courage displayed by that small group of New Englanders, Virginians, Yorkers, and Carolinians who dragged their colonies kicking and screaming out of the British Empire. By the time this essay is published, Pat Buchanan may well have withdrawn from the race, but the 1992 election was never the only motive for his campaign, and for many of his supporters, it was not even the primary motivation. The really important point of the Buchanan movement is that it finally gives the remnants of the American Republic a place to take their stand. With Ronald Reagan, they had a leader like Homer's Menelaus, who was "good at the battle cry" but rarely up to a fight against the most powerful enemies. With Mr. Buchanan, a street-brawler turned politician, they have a general who is willing to lead the charge in person.

"Give me somewhere to stand, and I shall move the Earth," said Archimedes, who only needed a lever long enough. Mr. Buchanan's challenge gives small "r" republicans of every type a place to stand and fight against the servile state, but it is up to them, in all their little communities, to provide the lever. ©

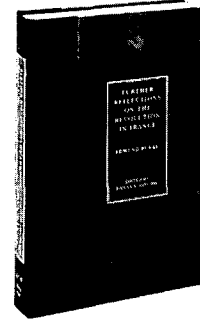
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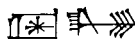
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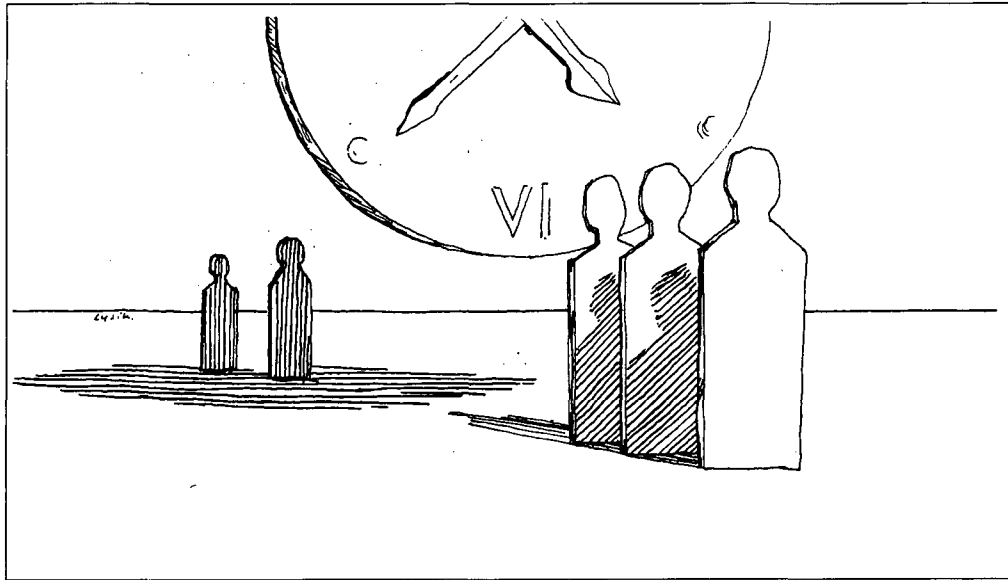


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Restoring the Republic

by Clyde Wilson



A history textbook used by thousands of college freshmen for the last twenty years tells fledgling citizens that democracy is the system of government which “trusts the average man to free himself from tradition, prejudice, habit, and by free discussion come to a rational conclusion.” This tissue of sophistry encapsulates the derailment of republican self-government in our time. Most certainly democracy has something to do with the “average man,” the common people, the many. But one of the numerous defects of the modern and artificial definition above is that it leaves out three-fourths of the moral and historical context that was taken for granted by the Framers and Founders of the American federal republic when they talked about a government of the people. The definition, in fact, subtly shifts democracy away from substance to procedure, from ethics to instrumentality. The pins have been kicked out from under democracy, leaving it balancing precariously on one leg.

The definition, to begin with, abandons virtue for reason. Our forefathers took it for granted that virtue was necessary in a ruler—whether it be the one, the few, or the many. And where in the definition do we find the ends and limitations of government? In other words, where is the Constitution? What tells us which things men in the collective are entitled to come to “rational conclusions” about, and what things are they to leave alone? What restrains the 51 percent from coming to

a “rational conclusion” to expropriate, enslave, or exterminate the 49 percent? And why is it necessary for the common man to divorce himself from “tradition, prejudice, habit”? In fact, the average man at all times and places (and the wise man too) is fond of tradition, prejudice, and habit, and rightly so. If we believe in the rule of the many, are we not obliged to respect their traditions, prejudices, and habits as well as what we deem to be their rational conclusions? What, after all, are our liberties and democratic forms—freedom of the press and assembly, fair play, parliamentary procedure, due process of law—if not traditions, prejudices, and habits handed down by our forefathers over centuries, which owe their survival to inheritance as much as to abstract argument.

Most assuredly “free discussion” is indispensable to democracy. That is, free, candid, and tolerant deliberation among differing opinions and interests in the process of arriving at decisions—decisions on those things which the public is entitled to decide. But free discussion divorced from “tradition, prejudice, habit” rather leads us away from the common man. It describes a type of society loved by the few, not by the many. Who exactly is it that is “trusting” the “average man” to arrive at a “rational conclusion”? “Rational” according to what system of values? According to whose views and interests? Here is the most insidious part of this peculiar modern democracy—the rationale for a hidden elite. If the average man perversely refuses to come to a “rational conclusion,” what happens?

What happens is a government of the few who decide, against the will of the many, that “free discussion” requires a foreign-born pornographer be subsidized to create obscenity; a gov-

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ernment in which the few enforce “rational” social policies (such as busing, affirmative action, coddling of criminals) overwhelmingly considered unjust and oppressive by the many; a government in which schools, local authorities, and even the taxing power (immemorially reserved to the people) are taken over by unelected and untouchable judges. Democracy suddenly requires the people to submit to their betters, whether they will or not. This, of course, is not democracy at all, but oligarchy, as our Fathers would have immediately recognized.

Again and again, we have seen the self-government of the American people frustrated by the few, the oligarchy, in the name of “rational democracy.” This is the problem of republicanism in our time—our chief dilemma in society and government—the consolidation of power in the hands of the few. It explains that, while sophisters (whenever they raise their snouts from the public trough long enough) shout hosannas to the triumph of democracy, the American people, everywhere, have ceased to believe that the government they elect is really theirs or that they will be allowed to make the institutions ostensibly theirs respond to their will. Everywhere an ideological construct mislabeled “democracy” has triumphed. And everywhere the people feel powerless.

For those who really value the rule of the people, as well as the special constitutional heritage of American federal republicanism, the task of the day is not to spread democracy about the world while we congratulate ourselves on our success. The task is to restore the federal republic at home. In order to carry out this task we will need the spirit of liberty that animated generations of our forefathers—not an obeisance to their forms, but an imitation of their spirit. For forms may survive when the soul is fled from them.

What we need is a return of power to the many. Not a concentration of power in the hands of the few for the alleged benefit of the many, abstractly conceived. That way lies Hitler and Stalin. Rather a dispersal and deconsolidation of power. Only power can check power. And self-government is in its nature local and individual. Only then is it real.

For our Fathers, liberty consisted in a negative upon government. It was not a boon bestowed by government, but something that must be asserted against government. It will not increase the power and liberty of American families in the least for the government to bestow upon them a voucher to spend on a limited choice of schools under stipulated requirements. It will rather further consolidate power and further intrude the government into as yet unregulated spheres of life. The only way to increase the power and liberty of the family is not to collect the taxes and not to lay down the regulations to begin with. Both our governing parties agree on the consolidation of power—they argue only over marginal aspects of administration.

Unlike us, the attitude of our Founders toward democracy was not ideological and not self-congratulatory. They believed in the right of those who were capable of governing themselves to do so. They were pleased that Americans had the fortunate opportunity to live under self-government at a time when, unlike today, most of the world was hostile to the very idea. They hoped they might set an example for oppressed mankind. They did not entertain a duty to spread democracy about the world by fire, sword, harangue, and money. They were the opposite of self-congratulatory and arrogant. Their demeanor was cautious, monitory, and self-demanding.

“Well, gentlemen,” Dr. Franklin is supposed to have said at

the Philadelphia Convention, “you have made a republic—if you can keep it.” If republican self-government was to survive, if Americans were to go on governing themselves, then government must be watched. Republican liberty could always be subverted by lust for power on the part of the cunningly ambitious few and by the decay of those strenuous and demanding virtues among the many that made self-government possible. When our Fathers spoke of America as an experiment, they did not mean a glorious mission of revolution. They meant an experiment in the exercise and preservation of republican virtues.

“Power is always stealing from the many to the few,” was the motto of a Washington democratic newspaper in the early days of the republic. It was a paraphrase of Mr. Jefferson’s “the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.” Mr. Jefferson also said that the tree of liberty must be watered from time to time by the blood of tyrants, and of patriots, that a little revolution now and then is a good thing.

Because Jefferson has been, since the mid-19th century, enveloped in a dense fabric of lies woven by Jacobin democrats and made the symbol of consolidated power in the name of equality, it is difficult for us to see what he meant. But what he meant was exactly what I have described above as the task of the day—the occasional need to restore the republic. He was not suggesting the overturn of society, a perpetual revolution for ever greater consolidation of power in the name of equality. Jefferson is nothing if not the enemy of consolidated power. It is not society that is to be overthrown—it is society, as in the American Revolution, that is to assert itself and overthrow those rulers who have usurped the power of society.

Democracy, as our forefathers clearly recognized, is not a group of people living under common procedures and economic exchanges. It is a social fabric of tradition, habit, and prejudice that makes self-government possible in a way that no proclaimed set of procedures or even carefully balanced interests can.

Jefferson’s democracy ran thus. No one can be trusted with power. Government, though necessary, must be confined within narrow limits and dispersed. The average man, the many, is the least dangerous receptacle of power, lacking the opportunities for usurpation that afflict the few. But the essential point is the limitation of power. As he asked Adams: “If man cannot be trusted to govern himself, how can he be trusted to govern others?” That was his answer to the Federalist contention that the weakness of human nature required popular government to be restrained by checks and balances and the deference of the “average man” to his betters. Jefferson put his finger immediately on the hidden elitist assumption, the hidden elitist agenda, that lurked in the contention—as it lurks in our guardian democracy today.

Trusting or not trusting the common man to arrive at a “rational conclusion” was the wrong way to put the problem. It was Jefferson’s point that the “betters” are just as corruptible, probably more so, than the popular mass—that is, more like-

ly to abuse the limits of power, which are the essential thing. Jefferson is here exactly in agreement with C.S. Lewis's Christian defense of democracy. That democracy makes sense exactly because of original sin—precisely because man (all men) cannot be trusted to govern himself, much less others. But the Federalist idea has prevailed since the War Between the States, and in this century, given the consolidating tendencies of the modern form of society, it has become overwhelming.

Jefferson's occasional revolution is not, then, revolution but reaction. Not a new utopia, but something radically conservative—a radical returning to the roots, to old viruses and old principles lost by the dilutions of time and the distortions of usurpation. In the American system this can only happen by the revival of states' rights, the only true force for limiting power. Which is exactly what Jefferson's own "Revolution of 1800" meant to him and his generation.

What we need is a reaction, a renewal, a true return to roots. We should approach our constitutional heritage and our governing establishment in exactly the spirit of our forefathers—with both deep respect and intelligent flexibility. To conserve is to save the essence, not the dead form, as true conservatives have always known. Our heritage is something to be understood and used by us to meet our present dangers. As Calhoun said, constitutions are human contrivances, and what man does and his reasons for it surely ought not to be beyond man's capacity to fully comprehend.

Let us contrast such an attitude with that of our current oligarchy. They want us to treat the Constitution with mystical awe and submission, but their Constitution is not the one handed down by our forefathers for our use. Rather, it is whatever the oligarchy mysteriously discovers it to be, by the alchemies of natural rights and evolution, which can justify any abuse of power on their part. On the other hand, they twist and distort the plain historical sense in the most petty and deceitful ways. Thus we get the worst possible combination of a phony tradition and destructive innovation. What we need is a real tradition and constructive innovation.

Many of the constructive innovations are already known at the grass-roots level, and others will emerge in the course of popular revolt. They seek to recover the spirit of the Constitution, to return power to the people. These would include term limits, for the federal judiciary as well as the Congress; a balanced budget amendment with inviolable restraints upon taxing and spending power; a line-item veto for the executive to check legislative irresponsibility, with balancing devices in the Congress to check executive warmongering; and the restoration of the Tenth Amendment to what Madison, the Father of the Constitution, said it should be, the cornerstone of our government. We have nothing to fear from a new constitutional convention, if necessary. Such a convention cannot destroy the handiwork of our Fathers. That has already been destroyed and must be restored. Whether we are able to accomplish this will be the measure of whether we have enough moral and social substance left to be a self-governing people.

We have not one problem to cure but two—the consolidation of power and the decay of virtue. But from the viewpoint of the classical republicanism of our Fathers these are but one and the same, two inseparable evils that feed upon each other. Consolidation of power breeds the decay of virtue in the people, and decay of virtue in the people breeds consolidation of power.

Our forefathers were neither economic determinists nor, like us, materialists. But they realized that, as Burke put it, the revenue is the state, that the power of taxation and expenditure is the master of all other powers. There is no clearer principle established in the American Revolution and the whole heritage of British liberty that preceded it. Put another way, the restoration of power to the people can only come with limitations on the taxing and spending power of the federal government, which has become autonomous and limitless. We despise our representatives and yet we reelect them at the greatest rate in history. This paradox is a key to our times. Our forefathers would have recognized this condition immediately as a symptom of decayed republican virtue. Our politicians buy us, with our own money. The habit of spoils is so deeply ingrained that only the most radical remedy will cure it.

The Cold War has ended, making possible a great decrease in the burden of expenditure carried by the American people for more than a generation. A responsible republican government would do two things in this situation—reduce taxes and retire debt. That is, the people would enjoy a great boon in the lifting of burdens, a peace dividend. It is a measure of our degradation that neither of our ruling parties has considered either alternative. Instead both parties and both branches of government have conspired to raise taxes. They have considered only the opportunity to broker funds in new ways and buy new allegiances. The peace dividend is not ours, but theirs. Like all economic questions, this is at bottom a moral question, which our leaders evade by seeming to see only a technical question. So accustomed are we to the evil system that we hardly notice the unreality of the debate.

The people must not only put limits on government. They must break their own dependence upon the corrupt system, give up the expectation that things will be done for them, and demand the return of our resources to ourselves, to dispose of in our own way. For liberty plain and simple is the ability to decide and dispose. This is even less easy than it sounds, because demands upon the Treasury always come disguised as public benefits; because we have as a people almost lost the ability to distinguish between public necessity and private subsidy; and because we have created an immense clamoring clientele that exists only on and for ever increasing patronage.

To restore the federal republic we will have to begin to level up rather than level down, to substitute liberty for equality as our chief goal. Ideological equality is the enemy of republican citizenship. It is in its guise as the imposer of equality that the overweening state has taken most power to itself, even more so than in war, and become the arbiter of society. Government programs for preferential groups must be ended, and all citizens become equal under the law. In no way else can we restore morale and productivity, belief in fairness and opportunity. We must take away from the oligarchy the brokering of how differing groups of a pluralistic society live together. Also, in order to restore the value of republican citizenship, it will have to be restricted. That means that immigration has to be reduced to a small number determined specifically by the future and current interest of the American people, not by any philosophical or economic consideration. We must end the system by which any respiring creature who manages to sneak under the fence becomes immediately entitled to all the rights and privileges of citizenship. To say that everyone in the world who can manage to get here is an American citizen is to say that there is no such thing as an

American citizen in any meaningful sense, to cheapen our citizenship beyond toleration. The restriction of immigration and citizenship rights will make American citizenship more valued and viable, not less so.

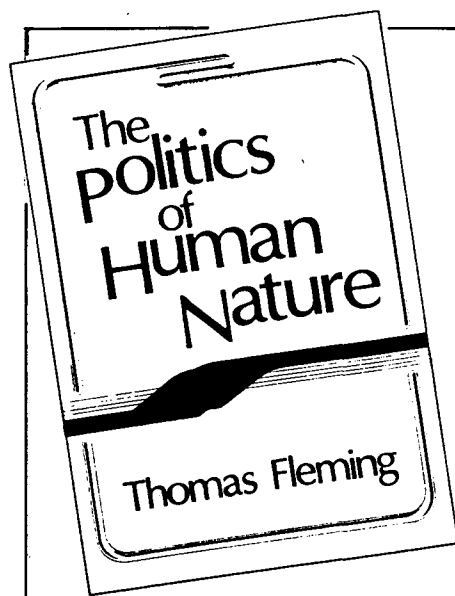
Democracy, as our forefathers clearly recognized, is not a group of people living under common procedures and economic exchanges. It is a social fabric of tradition, habit, and prejudice that makes self-government possible in a way that no proclaimed set of procedures or even carefully balanced interests can. A miscellaneous collection of people are not citizens of a republic but interchangeable ciphers of imperialism. The aspiration of a globalized citizenship is not the vision of republicanism but the dream of empire. In order for American society to begin to feel its power and reassert itself against government, it must have a period of stabilization. We must have time to absorb the great immigration we have received in the last three decades. Otherwise we will have a society increasingly fragmented rather than pluralistic, divided into hostile groups competing for advantage, a situation in which democracy cannot long survive, as the history of the world shows. Unlimited immigration serves the rich and the government, not the people.

Here we find the deep moral problem of modern society. Our unrestricted immigration, the celebration of constant and endless social transformation, does not result from allegiance to democracy or liberality of spirit. It results from the same state of mind as our economic irresponsibility—an inability to care about posterity and act for the future. A healthy society, like that of our forefathers, will automatically take account of the welfare of its posterity when it makes decisions. There can be no posterity in a society whose citizens are merely interchangeable parts of a politico-economic machine.

It is true that we live in a very different world from our Fathers and that our solutions cannot always be the same as theirs. But our problem is the same—the harnessing of power. They solved the problem for their time, and the problem is solvable in our time, given sufficient will and political genius. There is much in modern society that makes convenient the dispersal

and devolution of power as well as its consolidation. The computer can serve decentralization as well as centralization. There is no reason why we cannot have many small humane factories or schools rather than a few large ones. As Edward Abbey observed in one of the wisest insights of our time: "Growth is the enemy of progress." Consolidation of power is not so much inherent in our current state of society as it is the product of choices made and institutions constructed in the past that showed a bias in favor of gigantism over humane scale, centralized control over freedom, and elitism over democratic rule. In imitation of our Fathers we may solve the problem of consolidated power.

Allen Tate observed that our Founders "had a profound instinct for high style, a genius at dramatizing themselves at their own particular moment of history. They were so situated economically and politically that they were able to form a definite conception of their human role; they were not ants in an economic anthill, nor were they investigating statistically the behavior of other ants. They knew what they wanted because they knew what they, themselves, were." It may be that this sense of self-determination of free men enjoyed by our Fathers is an impractical goal, not fully realizable in the modern world. But unless we recover it at least as an ideal and a point of reference toward which we direct our collective selves, the American experiment has failed. The restoration of the federal republic will not in itself solve all our problems because the ends of human life do not rest in government and because modern society is in deep spiritual crisis, as every great thinker of our century has observed. But the restraint of power is a necessary first step for all progress—moral, economic, political, cultural. Leviathan has gotten loose from the harness our forefathers so skillfully fashioned for him. He has knocked over the fence, laid waste our gardens, and waxed fat on our substance. We must begin to look to our husbandry, but first we will have to chain the beast. In this task we have one great advantage—the preponderance of the American people are still republican at heart.



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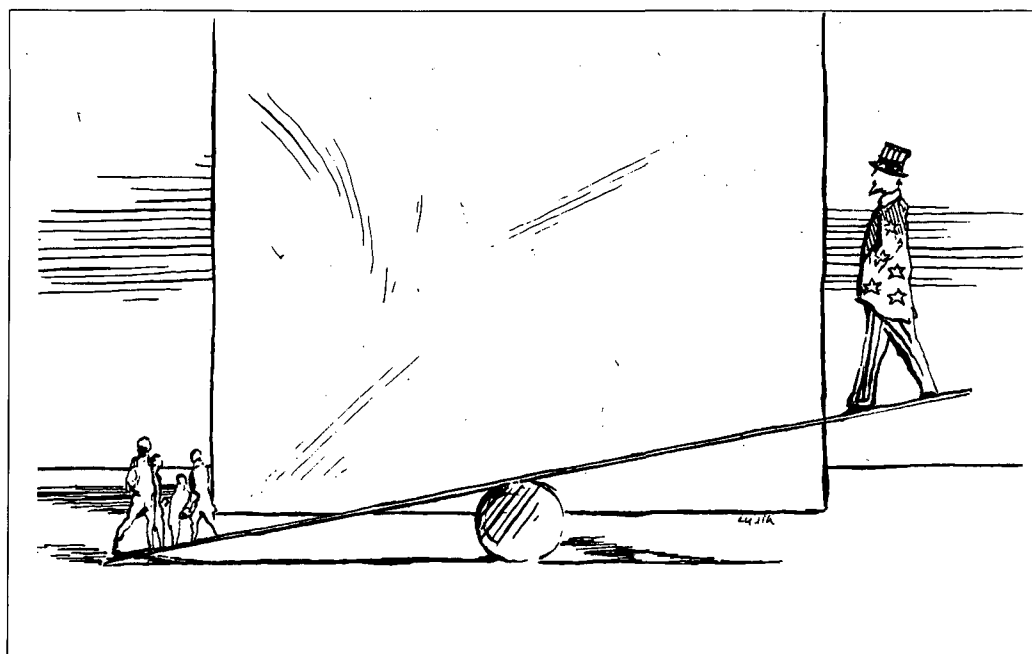
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Nationalism, Old and New

by Samuel Francis



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In the course of American history, nationalism and republicanism have usually been enemies, not allies. From the days of Alexander Hamilton, nationalism has meant unification of the country under a centralized government, the supremacy of the executive over the legislative branch, the reduction of states' rights and local and sectional parochialism, governmental regulation of the economy and engineering of social institutions, and an activist foreign policy—expansionist, imperialist, or globalist—that costs much money and requires at least occasional wars. Nationalism and its proponents have historically been Anglophiles, emulating the mercantilist dynastic state that flourished in Great Britain from the 18th century, and for all their claims of overcoming sectionalism and private interests, they have been identified with the Northeastern parts of the United States and its institutions—New England, New York City, the Ivy League, Big Banks and Big Business, Wall Street, and Washington. The national state the nationalists defended and constructed was born with the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, reached adolescence in the victory of the North in the Civil War, and grew to a corpulent adulthood in the 20th-century managerial state of Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson.

The principal opponents of nationalism in American history have been republicans, and it is one of the ironies of our history that the political party that claims the republican name has been the chief vehicle since the Civil War of anti-republican nationalism. The Antifederalists who opposed ratification of the Constitution were men immersed in the political theory of

classical republicanism, a school of thought that originated in modern times with Machiavelli, found expression in 17th-century British resistance to the powers of the monarchy, and in the 18th century influenced both radical Tories and radical Whigs. Deeply suspicious of centralized power of any kind and of the corruption it bred, the Antifederalists opposed ratification, demanded a Bill of Rights to limit federal power, insisted on a strict reading of the constitutional text as the basis of law, defended the states against the federal government and the Congress against the Presidency, and were generally content with the limitations on wealth and national power that a small, restricted state imposed, in preference to what they condemned as the “luxury” and “empire” that national consolidation and an interventionist foreign policy would encourage. “The anti-federalists,” writes Professor Ralph Ketcham in his introduction to a popular edition of their writings,

looked to the Classical idealization of the small, pastoral republic where virtuous, self-reliant citizens managed their own affairs and shunned the power and glory of empire. To them, the victory in the American Revolution meant not so much the big chance to become a wealthy world power, but rather the opportunity to achieve a genuinely republican polity, far from the greed, lust for power, and tyranny that had generally characterized human society.

Though the Antifederalists lost, their ideas, far more than those of Edmund Burke and Adam Smith, have informed the long American tradition of resistance to the leviathan state of the nationalists, appearing in the thought and on the lips of John

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Randolph, John C. Calhoun, the leaders of the Confederacy, the Populists of the late 19th century and the Southern Agrarians of the early 20th, and in the Old Right conservatism of the era between Charles Lindbergh and Jesse Helms.

In the 18th century, when the debate between these two sides of the American political coin still sparkled, it was possible for the American people and their leaders to choose republicanism and to institutionalize its ideals. Perhaps it was possible to do so as late as the early 20th century, before the managerial state began to crystallize. Today it is no longer possible. The national state has long since triumphed, and with it, wedded to it like Siamese siblings, multinational corporations, giant labor unions, universities and foundations, and all the titanic labyrinth of modern bureaucratic organizations in both the "public" and the increasingly illusory "private" sectors have won as well. To establish republicanism in anything like its classical form would involve a massive rejection and dismantlement of the main features of the 20th century—the physical and social technologies by which modern, centralized, bureaucratically managed mass organizations operate—and while the continued existence and dominance of such features are not inevitable in any Hegelian sense, no one save a few romantic reactionaries seriously contemplates doing away with them. Not only do technology and its organizational applications entice us with "luxury"—what we today complacently call a "high standard of living"—but also they offer to those who understand how to manipulate them a degree of power unknown to the most imperious despots of the past. The elites that manage modern mass organizations and master the technical skills that allow these organizations to function cannot permit the decentralization and autonomy that characterize republican civic culture simply because their own power would vanish, and these elites are lodged not only in the state but also in the dominant organizations of the economy and culture so that our incomes and our very thoughts, values, tastes, and emotions are conditioned and manipulated by them and their apologists. Short of a new Dark Age (or perhaps it would be a Golden Age), in which knowledge of scientific and organizational technology is lost, there is no prospect of reversing the trend toward mass organization and its absorption of local and decentralized institutions.

Moreover, as most students of classical republicanism understand, the distinctive principle of its theory is its concept of "virtue," a quality that consists less in moralistic purity than in personal and social independence. Owning and operating his own farm or shop, usually producing his own food and clothing, governing his own family and his own community, and defending himself with his own arms in company with his own relatives and neighbors, the citizen of the classical republic neither needed nor wanted a leviathan state to fight wars across the globe in behalf of democracy nor to pretend to protect him and his home. Nor did he need or want a job in someone else's company, or a pension plan or health benefits or paid vacations or five-hour workdays. He did not want to shop in vast shopping malls where nothing is worth buying and nothing bought will last the year. It did not occur to him to enroll himself or his children in therapy courses or in sensitivity and human-relations clinics in order to find out how to get along with his neighbors, and he sought no edification or instruction from the mass media to entertain him continuously or indoctrinate him with the current clichés and slogans of public discussion or trick him into buying even more junk for which he had no use and no desire. If the citizen succumbed to such temptations, then he had

become dependent on someone or something other than himself and his extensions in family and community. Men who become dependent on others cannot govern themselves, and if they cannot govern themselves, they cannot keep a republic.

Today, virtually everyone in the United States is habituated to a style of living that is wrapped up in dependency on mass organizations of one kind or another—supermarkets, hospitals, insurance companies, the bureaucratized police, local government, the mass media, the factories and office buildings where we work, the apartment complexes and suburban communities where we live, and the massive, remote, and mysterious national state that supervises almost every detail of our lives. Most Americans cannot even imagine life without such dependencies and would not want to live without them if they could imagine it. The classical republicans were right. Having become dependent on others for our livelihoods, our protection, our entertainment, and even our thoughts and tastes, we are corrupted. We neither want a republic nor could we keep it if we had one. We do not deserve to have one, and like the barbarians conquered and enslaved by the Greeks and Romans, we are suited only for servitude.

Classical republicanism, then, is defunct as a serious political alternative to the present regime, but this does not mean that Americans should either embrace the old, Hamiltonian nationalism or merely squat passively in their kennels waiting for the next whistle from their masters. Even though virtually no one today subscribes or adheres to the classical republican ideal of virtue and independence, even though most Americans are too "corrupt" (in republican terms) to support a republic, there remain a large number of Americans, perhaps a majority, whose material interests and most deeply held cultural codes are endangered by the national (and increasingly supranational) managerial regime. These "Middle Americans," largely white and middle class, derive their income from their dependence on the mass structures of the managerial economy, and, because many of them have long since lost their habits of self-reliance, they also are dependent on the services of the government (at least indirectly) and the dominant culture. Yet despite their dependency, the regime does little for them and much to them. They find that their jobs are insecure, their savings stripped of value, their neighborhoods and schools and homes unsafe, their elected leaders indifferent and often crooked, their moral beliefs and religious professions and social codes under perpetual attack even from their own government, their children taught to despise what they believe, their very identity and heritage as a people threatened, and their future—political, economic, cultural, racial, national, and personal—uncertain. They find that no matter which party or candidate they support, no matter what the candidates and parties promise, nothing substantially changes, except for the worse. Although they do the labor that sustains the managerial system, pay the taxes that support it, fight the wars its leaders devise, raise the families and try to pass on the beliefs and habits that enable the regime and the country to exist and survive, what they receive from the regime is never commensurate with what they give it.

They are the Americans sneered at as the "Bubba vote," mocked as Archie Bunkers, and denounced as the racists, sexists, anti-Semites, xenophobes, homophobes, and hate criminals who haunt the dark corners of the land, the "Dark Side" of America, even as their own energy, sacrifice, and commitment make possible the regime and the elite that despise

them, exploit them, and dispossess them. They are at once the real victims of the regime and the core or nucleus of American civilization, the Real America, the American Nation.

Throughout this century, Middle Americans have gradually acquired a collective consciousness, an awareness of who they are and what their position is in the regime that exploits them. In economically prosperous periods, the radicalism of that consciousness is largely dormant, but in the Depression, the inflationary crunch of the 1970's, and the recessions of the early 1980's and the early 1990's, material insecurity has served as a trigger for a heightened consciousness, a radicalization, a sharper self-perception of their plight. Neither liberalism and the ideologies of the left nor mainstream conservatism, an entrepreneurial version of classical republicanism, adequately expresses their plight or their interests and values or offers much of a solution.

The left offers nothing but economic redistribution predicated on egalitarian and universalist dogmas, and in practice this means that liberal-left policies reflect the interests of the nonwhite underclass and the intelligentsia that designs the formulas and policies of the left. Hence, the left is incapable of defending the specific interests and concrete cultural norms of Middle Americans. The right, though it defends (in theory) Middle-American cultural norms and institutions, offers a vision of decentralism, strict constitutionalism, economic individualism, and a minimal state that fails to speak to Middle-American material interests and the challenges that they typically encounter. What Middle Americans need is a political formula and a public myth that synthesize the attention to material-economic interests offered by the left with the defense of concrete cultural and national identity offered by the right. The division of the American political spectrum into the categories of right and left makes the political expression of such a formula virtually impossible.

The appropriate formula for the expression of Middle-American material interests and cultural values is nationalism. The managerial state and its linked economic and cultural structures have succeeded in breaking down the regional variations, local and sectional autonomy, and institutional stability and independence of Middle Americans, and the regime now lurches happily toward a globalization that seeks to integrate all Americans (and all other peoples as well) into a planetary political, economic, demographic, and cultural order in which national identity will eventually disappear entirely. The homogenization of subnational social and regional differences through political centralization, urbanization and mobility, mass communications, and mass consumption and production means that the older, decentralized identities of particular social classes, sections, communities, and religious and ethnic groups no longer effectively mobilize Americans for political action. Identities as Southerners or Midwesterners, Catholic or Protestant, Anglo-Saxon Old Stock or European ethnic, small businessman or assembly-line worker, no longer seem to offer sufficient bonds or common interests for serious political cooperation for any goal beyond immediate special interests. The emerging identity of Middle America, however, appears to convey sufficient meaning to serve as the foundation of a politically and socially important force, and a nationalism that is politically and culturally based on Middle Americans, expresses their material interests, and affirms their cultural norms as the dominant public myth of American civilization is today the only possible vehicle for effective resistance to managerial glob-

alism and the national and cultural extinction it threatens.

Moreover, only nationalism seems capable of organizing offensively on a collective scale. One reason for the failure of classical republicanism and similar decentralist movements was that they were capable of only defensive maneuvering and were never able to overcome divisions of particular and divergent interests and identities sufficiently to organize an effective offensive strategy aimed at dominance rather than mere survival and liberty. The defensive strategy mounted by the Confederacy during the Civil War was one of the main reasons for its military defeat, and similar defensiveness has crippled conservative tactics as well. Activated only by immediate threats to local or private interests, conservative forces have organized mainly around striking personalities and "single issues"—tax revolts, religious and social issues of largely sectarian concern, antitobacco and educational movements, anticommunism, deregulation, term limits—and they tend to disband or wither when their favorite personality is elected or the threats to their immediate interests and pet causes seem to be pushed back. Nationalism, through its historically proven capacity to mobilize passions of mass solidarity and sacrifice and its aggressive invocation of collective identity, offers a practical instrument for overcoming the burden of a purely defensive conservatism and aspiring to enduring cultural and political power.

The old nationalism of the Hamiltonian tradition will not suffice for this purpose, however. It was the explicit mission of Hamiltonian nationalism to obliterate what Hamilton's best and most recent biographer, Forrest McDonald, calls "the inertia of a social order whose pervasive attributes were provincialism and lassitude." The means by which Hamilton determined to accomplish that "revolutionary change" was money—wealth, economic growth—aided and supported by the national state. "To transform the established order," writes Professor McDonald,

to make society fluid and open to merit, to make industry both rewarding and necessary, all that needed to be done was to monetize the whole—to rig the rules of the game so that money would become the universal measure of the value of things. For money is oblivious to class, status, color, and inherited social position; money is the ultimate, neutral, impersonal arbiter. Infused into an oligarchical, agrarian social order, money would be the leaven, the fermenting yeast, that would stimulate growth, change, prosperity, and national strength.

But by making money "the universal measure of the value of things," the defining principle of the national identity, and joining it to centralized power, Hamilton ultimately defeated his own purposes. In the first place, because his nationalism set itself against existing social institutions and habits, it was necessarily alienated from and adversarial toward the norms by which most Americans lived, and its alienation has persisted for two centuries to inform the cultural style and attitudes of the dominant elites of the managerial system toward the rest of the country. Secondly, because his nationalism was based on the abstraction of money, it was unable to win the support of any but economically ambitious Americans and unable to express or sustain a genuinely national or even any genuine social bond. Hence, Hamilton's nationalism—rational, calculative,

pragmatic—degenerated into a mask for individual, factional, and sectional acquisition. It was not and could not be an authentic nationalism that controlled and disciplined the parts within the whole but only a pseudo-nationalism that allowed the parts to seize control of the whole and define the whole in terms of the parts and their interests. As another of Hamilton's biographers, John C. Miller, writes, the failure of Hamilton's nationalism probably "stemmed from the fact that he associated the national government with no great moral issue capable of capturing the popular imagination; he seemed to stand only for 'the natural right of the great fishes to eat up the little ones whenever they can catch them.'"

American nationalism after Hamilton, especially through Abraham Lincoln, sought to rectify this flaw by defining the ideal of national unity in terms of (more accurately, masking it with) a "great moral issue." Manifest Destiny was one such issue, and it quickly became a mask for territorial expansion, surviving in Wilsonian internationalism, the messianic anticommunism of Cold War liberalism, and the global democratism and "New World Order" of the post-Cold War neoconservatives. Equality was another such issue, and it too served as a mask for acquisitive individualism. Harry Jaffa is in a sense correct that the "principle of Equality" as he perceives it in the Declaration of Independence and in Lincoln's thought "is the ground for the recognition of those human differences which arise *naturally*, but in *civil society* when human industry and acquisitiveness are emancipated," though he is wrong in claiming that equality is "far from enfranchising any leveling action of government." The very process by which human acquisitiveness is "emancipated" involves the obliteration by the state of social barriers to acquisitiveness, and so it did in the attack on property and federalism that Lincoln unleashed in the Civil War. Hence, M.E. Bradford is also (and more importantly) correct when he writes that the depredations and corruptions of the Gilded Age, the "era of the Great Barbecue," the original "vulture capitalism," "began either under [Lincoln's] direction or with his sponsorship" and that Lincoln's administration laid "the cornerstone of this great alteration in the posture of the Federal government toward the sponsorship of business." It was indeed the cornerstone of the modern corporate state on which the twin towers of managerial capitalism and managerial government are grounded. The "great moral issues" that the old nationalism eventually selected, therefore, were little more than fantastic and easily penetrated costumes in which even older human passions of greed and lust for power sallied forth to their orgy.

Precisely because the old nationalism assumed an adversarial relationship toward the norms and institutions to which most Americans adhered, it could locate few forces in American society with which it could join, and it therefore came to rely almost entirely on a centralized state as the only "nationalizing" instrument available for its mission. Hence, the old nationalism was intimately bound up with abstraction, alienation, the serving of special rather than authentically national interests, and the consolidation of state power against its own society.

What a new, Middle-American nationalism must seek is a redefinition of nationalism away from the terms of the old. Since a Middle-American nationalism bases itself on the actual interests and norms of a concrete social group, it will not display the same adversarial alienation that affected the pseudo-nationalism it seeks to replace, nor will it need to rely on the

power of the national state to the same degree or in the same way. Nevertheless, the mission of the new nationalism must be not merely the winning of formal political power through elections and roll-call votes but also the acquisition of substantive social power and the displacement of the incumbent managerial elite of the regime by its own elite drawn from and representing the Middle-American social stratum. No social group becomes an elite unless it makes use of the instruments of force that are at the heart of the state, and hence, a Middle-American nationalism cannot expect to achieve its goals unless it employs the state to reward its own sociopolitical base and exclude its rivals from access to rewards. A Middle-American nationalism must expect to redefine legal rules, political procedures, fiscal and budgetary mechanisms, and national policy generally in the interests of Middle Americans, and it must do so with no illusions about rejecting, decentralizing, or dismantling the national state or the power it affords. Middle-American interests are dependent on the national state through various educational, fiscal, trade, and economic instruments, and a Middle-American nationalism ought to announce an explicit agenda of consolidating and enhancing these instruments. At the same time, a new nationalism must recognize that many of the organs of the national state exist only to serve the interests of the incumbent elite and its underclass allies—the arts and humanities endowments, and most or all of the Departments of Education, Labor, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, and Health and Human Services, and the civil rights enforcement agencies in various departments—and it should seek their outright abolition, as well as that of those agencies and departments in the national security bureaucracy that serve globalist and anti-nationalist agendas.

The mission of the new nationalism must be not merely the winning of formal political power through elections and roll-call votes but also the acquisition of substantive social power and the displacement of the incumbent managerial elite of the regime by its own elite drawn from and representing the Middle-American social stratum.

But power based merely on the state is insufficient for the reconstitution of American society under Middle-American dominance. State power indeed, though a prerequisite for the emergence of a new elite, is by itself a weak support, and it must be supplemented by cultural dominance. Under the incumbent elite and its regime, characteristic Middle-American norms of sacrifice for and solidarity with family, community, ethnicity, nation, religion, and morals, and their rules of taste and propriety, are under continuous attack, subversion, and delegitimization by the cultural and intellectual vanguards of the elite. In place of such norms, the elite offers an ethic of hedonism, immediate gratification, and cosmopolitan or universalist dispersion of concrete identities and loyalties, an ethic that serves the interests of the incumbent elite by encouraging a passive

and homogenized (though fragmented) culture of continuous consumption, distraction, entertainment, self-indulgence, surrender of social responsibilities to mass organizations, and the erosion of the concrete social identities and intermediary institutions that restrain the centralized manipulative power of both political and corporate structures.

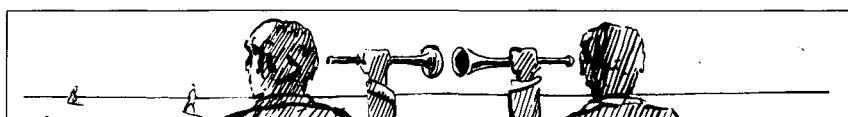
By far the most strategically important effort of an emerging Middle-American counterelite would be a long countermarch through the institutions of the dominant culture—universities, think tanks and foundations, schools, the arts, journalism, organized religion, the professions, labor organizations, and corporations—not only to assert the legitimacy of Middle-American cultural and ethnic identity, norms, and institutions but also to define American society in terms of them. Instead of an ethic of acquisitive individualism, immediate and perpetual gratification, distraction, and dispersion, the new nationalism should assert an ethic of solidarity and sacrifice able to discipline and direct national energy and reinforce national, social, and ethnic bonds of identity. The pseudo-nationalist ethic of the old nationalism that served only as a mask for the pursuit of special interests will be replaced by the social ethic of an authentic nationalism that can summon and harness the genius of a people certain of its identity and its destiny. The myth of the managerial regime that America is merely a philosophical proposition about the equality of all mankind (and therefore includes all mankind) must be replaced by a new myth of the nation as a historically and culturally unique order that commands loyalty, solidarity, and discipline and excludes those who do not or cannot assimilate to its norms and interests. This is the real meaning of “America First”: America must be first not only among other nations but first also among the other (individual or class or sectional) interests of its people. Unless a Middle-American nationalism (or any other sociopolitical movement) can achieve such cultural hegemony through the formulation of an accepted public myth, its political power and economic resources will remain dependent on the cultural power of its adversaries and eventually will succumb to their ma-

nipulation as it takes its cues on goals and tactics from its opponents.

If a new Middle-American nationalism is in some respects a synthesis and a transcendence of the conventional poles of right and left, it is also in another sense a resolution of the polar conflict between the classical republicanism and the nationalism around which so much of American political history has swung. Like the nationalist tradition, it concerns itself with the pragmatic defense of national interests in foreign affairs, military security, and political economy, but unlike the old nationalism it perceives a national interest beyond this pragmatic dimension in the preservation of the distinctive cultural and ethnic foundations of nationality, recognizing that pragmatic, material, and economic considerations may and should defer to the more central norms without which pragmatism is merely a meaningless process. The affirmation of national and cultural identity as the core of the new nationalist ethic acquires special importance at a time when massive immigration, a totalitarian and antiwhite multiculturalist fanaticism, concerted economic warfare by foreign competitors, and the forces of anti-national political globalism combine to jeopardize the cultural identity, demographic existence, economic autonomy, and national independence and sovereignty of the American nation.

Like the republican tradition, the new nationalism is essentially populist in tactics, locating the cultural and moral core of contemporary American society in a stratum that is the main victim of the regime that now prevails in the United States. Like republicanism also, it is less interested in the abstract pursuit of luxury and empire than in the defense of the characteristic norms and identity of the people it defines and represents, and like republicanism it calls that people to a duty higher than mere accumulation and aggrandizement, to a destiny of knowing who they are, where they came from, and what they can be. If they remain able to answer that call, they and their posterity may yet achieve both a virtue and a power that neither old republicans nor old nationalists were ever able to create. ◀

LIBERAL ARTS



UNSPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

“When the *New Republic* became the first mainstream national magazine with an openly gay top editor,” writes Stuart Elliott in the March 26 *New York Times*, “it was something of a publishing milestone.” When Andrew Sullivan, a 28-year-old Brit, became editor last October, some observers speculated that advertising sales for the magazine would drop, but this has not been the case because Mr. Sullivan is, according to Mr. Elliott, “a phenomenon in magazine publishing known as ‘the hot editor.’”

On the same day that the *New York Times* story appeared, the *Chicago Tribune* devoted the lead story of its “Tempo” sec-

tion to Andrew Sullivan and his sexual preference. The *Tribune* praised him for taking on “such hot topics as race, sex, and sexuality,” saying his homosexuality “has made him especially sensitive to the predicament of blacks and women.”

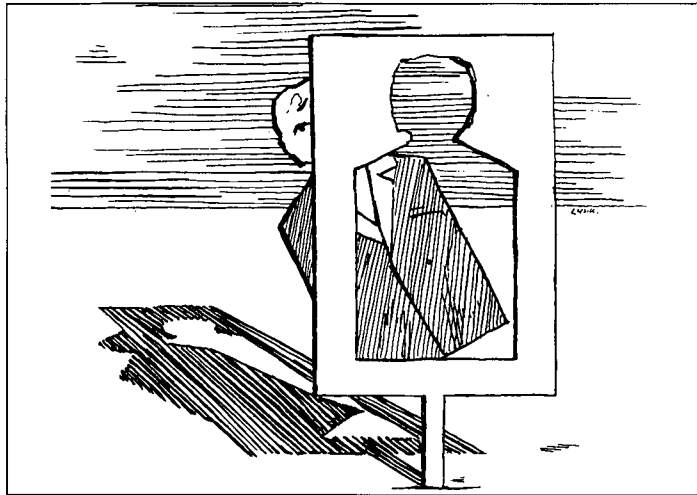
Homosexuality does indeed seem to be one of Mr. Sullivan’s “hot” interests. His lead editorial for the March 30 issue of the *New Republic* chastised America for ignoring “the other minority” that Pat Buchanan “assails”—the gay community. Mr. Sullivan also had the lead essay in the March 22 *New York Times Book Review*. He reviewed the latest biography of Aus-

tralian novelist Patrick White, explaining how it was White’s 50-year “homosexual marriage” to a Greek soldier that “anchored [his] emotional and artistic life until he died.”

The *New York Times* reported that Mr. Sullivan was to receive on April 6 an award for outstanding magazine editing from the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation at the organization’s third annual media awards ceremony. It was not stated how many previous editors of the *New Republic* had won awards for “outstanding magazine editing” after only five months on the job.

The American Crisis Without Alternative

by E. Christian Kopff



The most important event of the waning years of the 20th century is the collapse of the last of the great national socialist powers whose rise and fall dominated the generations after World War I. The Axis easily defeated their liberal and imperial opponents, but were crushed by the national socialist regimes of the Soviet Union (*alias* communism) and the United States (*alias* liberalism). The Soviet Union and the United States then dominated the globe in a symbiotic hostility that structured their ideologies and economies for some four decades. The collapse of the Soviet Union, weighed down by imperial obligations and domestic deficit spending, has removed the putative *raison d'être* from America's regime. It too is sinking fast under the weight of the same burdens that ruined Spain, bankrupted England, and disrupted the Soviet Union. Our victory is like the one that ends *Rocky II*. The winner is reeling to the canvas even as the referee announces his opponent's defeat.

The question thoughtful Americans are asking themselves in 1992 does not concern the presidential campaign, which can scarcely effect matters at this late date, but rather the nature of the regime that will follow the collapse of the one installed by President Roosevelt. We cannot afford to be caught like the Roman Senate after the assassination of Caligula, debating the future while the Praetorian Guard escorts Claudius to the troops to settle matters. What are we going to do when the government collapses? Do we want to restore classical republicanism or accept the principle of recrudescence nationalism?

The United States may not remain united, any more than the republics of the Soviet Union. Those who dwell in New York and Washington may be impressed with the homogenization of American society. Examples abound from around the world. My son made friends in his Italian preschool by marching into class waving his Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle toy (purchased here for about three dollars and worth six times that much in Europe) and proclaiming "*Ecco Michelangelo!*" The cultural unity implicit in this incident has economic and political implications, but Italy's future lies with the hegemony of a federalist Germany dominating a Europe where language and cul-

ture will keep the divisions as real as the very real economic unity. A similar economic unity with cultural division will probably reign in the states of the former Soviet Union. Those who live in the land ruled from Washington and New York know that a superficial homogenization exists side by side with profound sectional, cultural, social, and racial divisions.

The partition of the former United States into republics, with the states maintaining the minor role that they currently play, is not unthinkable. The Rocky Mountain states may join with the Northwest. Texas may attract the Southwest. The South is still a unity in many respects. California and Quebec may go their own ways. Economic unity there will still be, but political unity may not survive the breakdown of order that may follow the collapse of public credit. Anticommunists liked to say in the waning years of the old Soviet Empire that everybody talked like good Communists, but "nobody believed in the system." The serious sectional and racial divisions of today's America are nonetheless real because they are not discussed by our "free press."

Any government that hopes to succeed the current regime after its economic collapse has to take into account the divisions of American society. The lessons of history indicate that proclaiming restoration is the soundest basis for founding a lasting government. Compare Augustus with Pericles.

Pericles dominated Athens in the middle third of the fifth century, B.C. By the time he rose to power the Athenian democracy had already formed its distinctive institutions and had used its role in the national opposition to Persia to create a maritime empire that dominated the eastern Mediterranean and controlled the grain trade from the Crimea. Pericles was a realist, who used the tribute from the Delian League not only to maintain Athenian naval supremacy, but also to pay the Athenians to perform their duties as citizens and to finance major public works projects. (They got the Parthenon; we get Mapplethorpe.) He proposed a law to limit Athenian citizenship to those born of citizens on both sides. There is reason to believe that he openly spoke of Athenian hegemony over other Greek cities as a "tyranny." He did not pretend respect for the moral and religious ideals of Athens. He left his wife and took a foreign mistress and then tried to get citizen

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status for their son. (After his death the son, Pericles "Junior," was granted citizenship.) He passed his time with Anaxagoras, who proclaimed the sun no god but a hot rock about the size of Southern Greece, and with Protagoras, for whom "Man was the measure of all things." Pericles combined clear-eyed political realism with what amounted to open contempt for traditional values. He died shortly after involving Athens in yet another of the imperialistic wars that had marked his rule. Periclean democracy collapsed a generation after his death and the restored democracy of 403 proclaimed its attachment to the moralistic Solonian regime of the early sixth century, not to the antitraditional Periclean model.

Nineteen-year-old Gaius Octavius found himself adopted by his uncle Julius Caesar after the latter's assassination in 44 B.C. The old Republic of aristocratic hegemony tempered by annual elections and tribunician vetoes had succumbed to the pressures created by Rome's dominance of the Mediterranean following her victory over Carthage in the late third century. The date of the crisis of the old Republic is debatable. I see it in the attempt by the patrician Claudian family to assume virtual control over the Roman system by means of the brilliant young aristocrat, Tiberius Gracchus, tribune for 133. Under the guise of providing farms for Roman soldiers, Gracchus attempted to seize all the public land in Italy to be distributed by a committee consisting of himself, his teenage brother, Caius, and his father-in-law, Appius Claudius, the richest man in Rome. To support his plan, he seized control of the tax revenues of the wealthiest state in the Mediterranean, Asia. A riot led by the Pontifex Maximus ended in Tiberius' death, but the lesson that a combination of welfare for the "deserving poor" and imperialism for the ambitious rich could be the basis for power was well learned by the Roman aristocracy. By 44 B.C. the Mediterranean was in ruins and most of the old Roman nobility dead. The free state was lost, according to Cicero, but it was a "crisis without alternative," in the words of German historian Christian Meier. No other system seemed acceptable. Julius Caesar sought the imposition of a monarchy, openly asserting the death of the old regime. The knives of Brutus and Cassius vetoed the proposal. Octavian, as Gaius Octavius was called after his adoption, had another plan.

He proclaimed the restoration of the old Republic. He gave control of the free state back to the Senate and the People. In return he received the honorary title Augustus and held the powers of the old Tribunes on a permanent basis. He controlled appointments of commanders of the army and had veto power over senators when they ran provinces. He was thus able to put a stop to the aristocratic feeding frenzy that had nearly bankrupted the Mediterranean in an orgy of welfarism at home and interventionism abroad. If the nobility refused to play by the rules of the common good, the *res publica*, there was now a Princeps, a First Citizen, to act as umpire.

It was clear to ancients and moderns alike that this was not the old Republic. Augustus' hypocrisy extended beyond politics. He passed laws to enforce sexual morality although he had married his wife when she was pregnant. He boasted of building and restoring temples where he never worshiped. The parallels with Ronald Reagan could be extended. His cynical hypocrisy in manipulating public opinion, in instituting the monarchy his adopted father had planned while publishing his restoration of the Free State has been memorably etched in Ronald Syme's 1939 classic *Roman Revolution*. Only in his last pages does Syme admit that the Augustan regime rescued the

Mediterranean from a century of violence and exploitation and gave it two hundred years of growth and prosperity. Trade was free from Britain to Egypt, from Syria to Spain. Cities sprang up all over the empire. Moderns can travel a hundred miles into the Libyan desert to visit Roman villas and pass by Roman aqueducts. Literature and art achieved marvelous levels of ambition and accomplishment. Europe dreamed for a thousand years of this government. It fell in the early third century, A.D., after the reign of the realist Septimius Severus, who openly based his government on control of the army and contempt for the facade of constitutional government.

No society that repudiates its traditions prospers. Classical republicanism has roots deep in the ancient world, beginning with the development of democracy from sixth-century *isonomia* and continuing on to the critiques of Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle, the application of philosophical theory to the Roman Republic by Polybius and the exemplification of that theory by Sallust, Cicero, and Livy. It was no accident that Machiavelli's most important work took the form of a commentary on Livy. The Athenian democracy, the Roman Republic, the Florentine state, the American federal Republic were very different states. They all form part of a political tradition that is as old and as important as the intellectual tradition of science. There are other traditions, but this one has deep roots in our nation's moral infrastructure. The example of Augustus hints that if we are to move beyond our own crisis without alternative, we must do so by proclaiming a restoration.

We moderns must place ourselves inside traditions if we want to innovate. The ancient Greeks could create what no one had dreamed of before, but we are not like that. We create best when looking backwards, like Leopardi's Italians and Yeats' Irish. "Cast your minds on other days, that we in future days may be still" what we were and can be again, even though it be something very different from anything "we" ever were. The motto of the party of progress must be "Keep it like it was." For good or for ill, republicanism is our political tradition.

Augustus' use of tribunician power bore only a tenuous relationship to the historical Tribunes of the Plebs and their very concrete rights of intercession. There will be many areas where we shall have to improvise in ways that form no part of classical republicanism. We should not hesitate to do so, nor should we heed cries of inconsistency shrieked by bookish republicans and centralizing opponents. There will be advantages in using republicanism to construct our new government. We shall keep decisions on the lowest level and have a good excuse to dismantle hostile institutions. We should not, of course, be led by ideology to attack friendly institutions. The NEA must go; we must encourage the NEH. One promotes pornography; the other encourages the traditions of scholarship that go back to Alexandria. One is a friendly institution, the other hostile. That is not all we know on Earth, but in building a new national order, it is all we need to know. Patrick Buchanan was urged to reject federal matching funds in his campaign. Had he done so, he would have disappeared down the memory hole. Dissidents need to fight with the weapons at hand. We must be loyal to the time-tested principles of the past, but use the living institutions of the present to create our new future.

The "Restoration of Republicanism" will allow us to avoid perils raised by nationalism in three paradigmatic areas: isolationism, protectionism, and immigration. The ideals of a Republic are virtue and autonomy. They do not involve telling oth-

er lands how to behave. The 18th century saw in loyalty to monarch the essence of political virtue. Our Founding Fathers came to think otherwise, but they did not proclaim the superiority of our system to all others. It was better for us and that was enough. It should be enough for us too. We should recognize de facto governments in all countries—Croatia, Haiti, Algeria, China, wherever. We do not know that military dictatorship is worse for Haiti or Algeria than what democracy can offer them. President Nixon tells us that “we cannot remain at peace in a world at war.” We did so for a century, with occasional lapses due to clumsiness and inexperience. Nationalism has traditionally needed enemies to foster unity. A republic aims at attaining the security of its citizens, and that effort takes all its energies. Given our disastrous economic and educational situation, the way of republican virtue is also the way of national prudence. If we devote ourselves to educating our citizenry, trading with everyone not at war, and discouraging predatory trading within our boundaries—and it is opposition to predatory trading that has led some to call us “protectionists”—we shall have done our duty. We shall still need a standing army to defend our nation in the dangerous period that is coming. Its commitment should be to defend the American Republic, however, not “democracy.”

European nationalism developed out of the monarchies that formed the nation-state. Citizenship was given to all born in the king’s domain, *les régnicoles*. Republics from Athens on down have had another ideal. The citizen is chosen by the group. Parturition on alien soil after swimming the Big River establishes nothing. Even generations of habitation is not enough to validate the citizenship of a metic. Without this distinction, one implicit in ancient political thought and essential to our national identity since Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, our nation cannot recover from the financial and cultural ravages of a dying national socialist regime founded on and historically heir to an imperial ideal. Again, national prudence is linked to republican virtue. If the republican insight needs validation, let us hold a national plebiscite. We support states’ or regional rights on many topics—abortion, education, public support for the arts—but not on citizenship. There is no area where traditional republicanism has more to say to a new American regime.

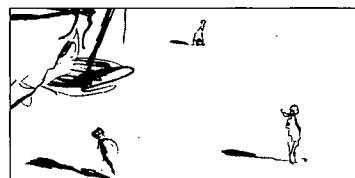
So we proclaim the restoration of the old Republic, knowing that we shall be founding a new state. Are we not Jesuitical casuists, perhaps even Straussians? Are we not hypocrites like Augustus? Would it not be better to imitate Pericles, who was an honest man and a realist? Well, was he a realist? “Righteousness is an essential part of *Realpolitik*,” the great German historian Hermann Strassburger tells us. Who molded a system that brought prosperity and creativity to most of the known world for centuries, and who led his country dancing the downward path to defeat and ruin? Augustus forged a new system by proclaiming its roots in and its loyalty to the old Republic. Pericles ruined his state by undermining its foundations in traditional morality and religion. The new is born out of the old. Nothing is born from a barren desert.

We cannot expect the government that will emerge from the collapse of the Roosevelt regime to resemble the Constitution Washington helped create, never mind the loose confederation that won the tax revolt against the British Crown. As Augustus saw, the only basis for creating the new institutions we need in the face of economic and moral bankruptcy is a commitment to the ideals that served as the basis of national unity and personal creativity in the past. The attainment of truth, freedom,

and creativity rests on belonging to a tradition that fosters those ideals. Not all traditions do, but we have access to one that does. I cannot predict what government will emerge from the confusion of the near future. The American nation that we have to create may not even have the same boundaries as the United States of America. If we proclaim the ideals of classical republicanism and the public religion, ethics, and education typically associated with that tradition, our new government will win the hearts of the people and will serve as the basis of prosperity, creativity, and, yes, perhaps even of freedom. We must not believe that a healthy society, or a creative individual, can live on bread alone or on scientific observations alone. In the end, men live by stories, by myths, by examples of virtue and excellence, by religion. As George Washington said, “Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

As we strive to create a new government, we must never forget our duty to awaken our nation to anamnesis, to remembering what we knew. The laughter and slander of the lackeys of a dying regime must not deter us. “To keep it the way it was” was the motto of the Monkey Wrench Gang. These are not the words of Responsible Conservatism. The pragmatist and the realist will mock them for their self-contradiction. We know in our hearts and from history that these words are the truly pragmatic, the truly realistic motto for creating a future where our fathers could have been at home and where our grandchildren will be. No matter what form that government will finally assume, if we do our duty, we shall one day be able to look in our grandchildren’s eyes and say to them without blinking, “When we had affairs in our hands, we restored the Republic.” ◊

LIBERAL ARTS



BUSING CONTINUES

The plan to “bus affluent pupils to low-income neighborhoods” in La Crosse, Wisconsin, met with bitter opposition, the *Los Angeles Times* reported last March. The objective of forced busing “based on family income rather than race” was to provide “equal educational opportunities” and lessen the “burden” on teachers with low-income pupils. Instead, “the latest attempt at social engineering” sparked a backlash of heightened class division and a campaign to recall members of the school board, which Kevin O’Keefe, a lawyer for the opposition, said lacks “sensitivity to the wants and desires of the taxpayers.”

Now

(In the bicentennial year of the American Constitution)

by Harold McCurdy

1.

Between the tornadoes and the blossoming pears,
Hard rock, hospitals, daycare centers, bombs,
We sometimes, under stress, give way to prayers
Of gratitude or terror; but God numbs
Us to old visions and allows no new,
Except computers, and, of course, TV,
Before which we have knelt, as formerly we
With more affection knelt, Lord Christ, to you.

2.

Turing's invention threatens to stop us cold
And flatten us to a shape we've never been,
One-dimensional, binary, fixed in a mold
Completely heartless, artless, and without sin,
No further needing love or hands or faces
But only one number each, which, though as long
As Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, will be no song;
No, but the small grist of the data bases.

3.

Is it too late to ask, once more, for more?
Our West has closed its vast horizons down,
Our vertical space has been preempted for war:
This is that Progress that turned country to town,
Town to a city, city to a slum
More dismal than a bog. If we escape
New Hiroshimas in the new Turing shape,
Will this then be the Kingdom that was to come?

4.

Computers have no wishes, dreams, or fears
Etched in their micro-circuits. We still do.
And in this interim before the years
Bring us to mega-crimes without a clue
In any intent of ours, Lord Christ, we rest
Our case with you. Pity us here on the peak
Of our accomplishments, alienated, weak,
Who have exhausted the inexhaustible West.

5.

Our duty was to remember—remember with love—
Christopher, the Christ-bearer; how he came
Attended by a great multitude, a cloud of
Martyrs, witnesses, planting in God's name
The Red Cross here. Not having done that, we
Yield memory to the computer, and forget
Our lineage and our mission, though stars yet
As Cross or Swan burn in the galaxy.

6.

Stretched on the cross of secular affairs,
Taking no comfort in the Pentagon,
Or secret agents, or the stout-lunged players
Strutting upon the stage in Washington,
We sweat into the future. Denied escape
Except by entrepreneurial makeshift hope,
Or Ouija board, or space voyages, or dope,
We talk like parrots, chatter like an ape.

7.

Meanwhile, Peacekeepers, multiple-headed, nest
In desert burrows ready to be called
By a red button imperatively pressed
To spread their dove wings under the Eagle's sprawled
Imperial rage, should the Great Bear resist
Pure reason. Such the public rhetoric.
Secretly, the computers whirl and click
And weave inevitabilities as they list.

8.

Their empire, which begins by requiring us
To copy account numbers on our checks, expands
Toward unimaginable limits. Pelagius,
Founder of this Republic, waves his hands
In blessing over it. Who needs Mercy or Grace?
Programmed, society will now fulfill
All the hubris of the Pelagian will,
And, unbaptized, confront the Black Holes of Space.

9.

In truth, no one can know what no one knows.
But Fear and Desire still struggle against loss,
And, should a nova flare, or a great rose
Of ice-light blazing round a parhelion Cross
Unfold above the Dew Line, hope might spring
A second time in the all-too-human breast,
And a cry, tearing the death-veil from the West,
Ring out, "Sing, children! Enter the Kingdom, and sing!"

10.

Until such miracle, we of the West
Focused on Me and Now, have little room
For tag-ends of the Holy, rags of the quest
That started in Jewry at an empty tomb
And brought us, late, to a far cactus land
Where deeper than the round-eyed burrowing owl
MX's burrow, and the seismic growl
Of underground nuclear testing shakes the sand.

Why We Need A Smaller U.S. Population And How We Can Achieve It

We need a smaller population in order to halt the destruction of our environment, and to create an economy that will be **sustainable** over the very long term.

We are trying to address our steadily worsening environmental problems without coming to grips with their root cause – overpopulation.

If present immigration and fertility rates continue, our population, now over 254 million, will pass 400 million by the year 2050 -- and still be growing rapidly!

All efforts to save our environment will ultimately be futile unless we not only halt U.S. population growth, but reverse it, so that our population can eventually be stabilized at a **sustainable** level – far lower than it is today.

The Optimum U.S. Population Size

The central issue is surely this: **At what size should we seek to stabilize U.S. population?** Unless we know in what direction we should be headed, how can we possibly devise sensible policies to get us there?

The size at which our population is eventually stabilized is supremely important because of the effect of sheer numbers on such vitally important national goals as a healthy environment, and a sustainable economy.

We believe these goals can best be achieved with a U.S. population in the range of 125 to 150 million, or about its size in the 1940s. This optimum size could be reached in about three to four generations if we do two things now that are well within our grasp.

How To Get There

1. **Reduce annual immigration to about 200,000** so that it is in rough balance with emigration (out-migration). Then, immigration will no longer contribute significantly to our population growth, as it does now.

2. **Lower our fertility rate** (the average number of children per woman) from the present 2.1 to around 1.5 and maintain it at that level for several decades. We believe that non-coercive financial incentives will be necessary in order to reach that goal.

If almost all women had no more than two children, our fertility rate would drop to around 1.5, because many women remain childless by choice, or choose to have not more than one child. **We promote the ideal of the two-child maximum family as the social norm, because that is the key to lowering our fertility.**

NPG Proposes These Incentives to Motivate Parents to Have Not More Than Two Children

- Eliminate the present Federal income tax exemption for dependent children born after a specified date.
- Give a Federal income tax credit **only** to those parents who have not more than two children. Those with three or more would lose the credit entirely.
- Give a refundable tax credit (cash payment) to low income parents who are eligible for the tax credit, to the extent that the credit exceeds their tax liability.
- Give a cash bonus for voluntary sterilization to both men and women under age 35, who have already had at least one child.

Two Vastly Different Paths Lie Before Us

With the reductions in immigration and fertility we advocate, our nation could start **now** on the path toward a sustainable population of 125 to 150 million.

Without such a program, we are almost certain to continue our mindless, headlong rush toward catastrophic population levels.

If you agree that we need to work toward a smaller U.S. population, we need your support. **NPG is the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and for specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

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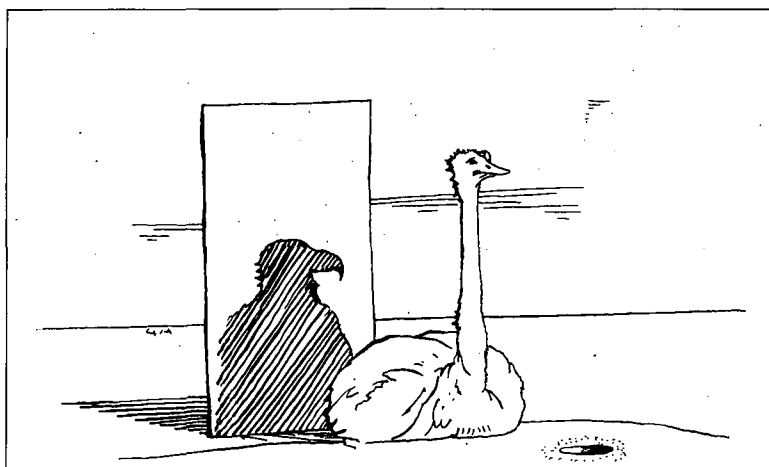
C492

America: Ostrich or Eagle?

by Theodore Pappas

"Republics exist only on tenure of being agitated."

—Wendell Phillips



Rising Sun
by Michael Crichton
New York: Alfred A. Knopf;
355 pp., \$22.00

The Japan That Can Say No: Why Japan Will Be First Among Equals
by Shintaro Ishihara
New York: Simon and Schuster;
158 pp., \$10.00

America Asleep: The Free Trade Syndrome and the Global Economic Challenge
Edited by John P. Cregan,
Foreword by Patrick Buchanan
Washington, D.C.: The United States Industrial Council Educational Foundation; 201 pp., \$8.95

As a gorgeous American call girl lies murdered on the 46th floor of Los Angeles' Nakamoto Tower—a Japanese conglomerate's newly erected American headquarters—a grand opening celebration with Washington and Hollywood notables is in full-swing on the floor below. Security cameras have recorded the murder, but the video tapes have been

Theodore Pappas is the associate editor of *Chronicles*.

tampered with by Japanese officials who are hindering the police investigation with cries of racism and "Japan bashing." Young Peter Smith—the LAPD's Japanese liaison who knows nothing about Japanese behavior but who likes the exorbitant stipend Japan provides for "language training"—has been called to the scene. He is accompanied by semiretired policeman John Connor, who is steeped in Japanese culture from years of living abroad. While in Nakamoto's glass elevator—for which the Japanese company received a special city permit to exceed the legal limit of ninety floors and to "bypass [American] unions because of a so-called technical problem that only Japanese workers could handle"—they overhear a group discuss the rate at which the Japanese are buying California real estate. "In no other country in the world," laments Connor upon exiting the elevator, "would you hear people calmly discussing the fact that their cities and states were sold to foreigners." "Discussing?" Smith retorts, "They're the ones doing the selling."

And so begins the latest thriller from novelist and film director Michael Crichton. The narrative is riveting and captivates the reader with high-stakes intrigue and political and industrial espionage. It is also, admittedly, fiction as political polemic, with situations and characters

that exist exclusively as opportunities for cultural comment and political harangues. As Mr. Crichton states forthrightly in a postscript, "This novel questions the conventional premise that direct foreign investment in American high technology is by definition good, and therefore should not be allowed to continue without restraint or limitation." There follows a bibliography more akin to an academic book on Japanese culture, economics, and business psychology than a successful work of mass-market fiction. He encourages his readers to delve deeper into actual trade practices and by so doing to learn a lesson in realpolitik: "It is absurd to blame Japan for successful behavior, or to suggest that they slow down. The Japanese consider such American reactions childish whining, and they are right. It is more appropriate for the United States to wake up, to see Japan clearly, and to act realistically."

Rising Sun is replete with explanations of price fixing, product dumping, patent flooding, and influence peddling, and as such constitutes a virtual textbook on current Japanese trade practices. The author embellishes and enhances the credibility of his narrative with references to actual persons and recent events, such as the Toshiba controversy of 1987—when hordes of paid American lobbyists blan-

keted Capitol Hill to defend the company's sale of critical submarine parts to the Soviet Union—and many of the instances of influence peddling recounted in Pat Choates' 1990 *Agents of Influence*. If Mr. Crichton were rewriting his book today, he would no doubt add some mention of the latest scandal involving Japanese trade: on April 1 Japan's largest military electronics manufacturer, Japanese Aviation, pleaded guilty in U.S. Federal Court to selling illegally to Iran navigation equipment for fighter jets. Japanese Aviation had been contracted by Honeywell, a deal the State Department approved, to make the parts only for Japan's fleet of F-4 fighters. The Japanese company agreed to pay a \$10-million criminal fee, \$5 million to the State Department for administrative costs, and to accept a one-year ban on receiving any additional export licenses from the United States. The penalties are the highest ever imposed for export violations.

But the most interesting and no doubt controversial sections of *Rising Sun* are the explanations of the cultural differences between Japan and the United States and the alarming examples of the extent to which Japan has penetrated America's cultural infrastructure. On Japanese racism:

The Japanese think everybody who is not Japanese is a barbarian. They mean it, literally: barbarian. Stinking, vulgar, stupid barbarian. They're polite about it, because they know you can't help the misfortune of not being born Japanese. But they still think it.

On the differences between Japanese and British and Dutch investment in the United States:

Yes, it's true that the British and the Dutch both have larger investments in America than the Japanese. But we can't ignore the reality of targeted, adversarial trade as practiced by Japan—where business and government make a planned attack on some segment of the American economy. The British and Dutch don't operate that way. . . . And, of course, if we want to buy a Dutch or English company, we can. But we can't buy a Japanese company.

On the free trader's retort that the bal-

ance of payments with Japan is dropping:

Of course it only looks better because they don't export so many cars to us now. They make them here. . . . They've stepped up purchases of oranges and timber, to make things look better. Basically, they treat us as an underdeveloped country. They import our raw materials. But they don't buy our finished goods.

On Japan's penetration of American education:

Japanese companies now endow twenty-five professorships at M.I.T., far more than any other nation. . . . At the University of California at Irvine, there's two floors of a research building that you can't get into unless you have a Japanese passport. They're doing research for Hitachi there. An American university closed to Americans. . . . You know they already own ten American colleges. Own them outright. . . . So [in case of a backlash against Japan] they can be assured of the ability to send young Japanese to America.

"The Japanese are not our saviors," concludes Mr. Crichton in his afterword. "They are our competitors. We should not forget it."

Trade and competition between America and Japan was the subject of the 1989 Japanese best-seller *The Japan That Can Say No: Why Japan Will Be First Among Equals*. The book was a series of speeches given by Sony chairman Akio Morita and by novelist and longtime Liberal Democratic Party leader Shintaro Ishihara. They frankly criticized America for meddling in Japanese affairs, encouraged Japan to reassert its will in Pacific affairs by using its vast wealth and technological know-how, and urged the country's leadership to quit playing "little sister" to a patronizing and enfeebled Uncle Sam. The Pentagon caught wind of the book and arranged for a bootleg version of it to be circulated in Congress, after which a fury of anger swept over Capitol Hill. Ishihara contended that the outrage was the result of the Pentagon's shoddy translation, where-

upon he negotiated for an English-language volume of his portion of the book—Akio Morita having dissociated himself from the project because of the controversy—along with some additional chapters to be published by Simon and Schuster. The book appeared in January 1991, and was widely reviewed by the American media. But much has happened since that time to make a reappraisal of Ishihara's views both prudent and productive, not least of which is the wider dissemination of his ideas with the recent release of a paperback version of his book.

At one point in *Rising Sun*, fictional Senator John Morton says, "You know, some day an American politician is going to do what he thinks is right, instead of what the polls tell him. And it's going to look revolutionary." To the annoyance of the ruling elite in Washington and Tokyo, both nations now have such "revolutionary" figures, and they represent not further politics as usual but a desire for fundamentally changing the course of their respective countries. They are Patrick Buchanan and Shintaro Ishihara.

The similarities between the two men are striking. Both are strong and pugnacious characters—Buchanan the young boxer brawling with a cop, Ishihara the brass kid of occupied Japan provoking U.S. soldiers with his refusal to step aside in deference to allow "the new conquerors" to pass. Both men abhor the politically fashionable and opt instead for frank and free discussion, and both as a consequence have been denounced as reactionary, racist, and ultranationalist (these being the kindest and gentlest of the epithets hurled at Pat Buchanan). And both men have challenged their country's ruling political class by calling for a new nationalism and a return to a foreign and domestic policy explicitly based on national prosperity, security, and self-interest. One might think that the statement, "Without nationalism—a strong sense of roots and identity—there cannot be internationalism, only a shallow cosmopolitanism," came from Pat Buchanan or a *Chronicles* editor, but it is classic Ishihara. Whether it be Buchanan's America First or Ishihara's Japan First, both policy platforms stem from fervent patriots proud of their own cultural and national heritage.

This is not to deny the many trade and foreign policy issues over which both men as heads of government would doubtless disagree. Indeed, Washington would do

well to consider how U.S.-Japanese relations would change if Tokyo ever again translated the Japan First policy it pursues in the economic realm into the field of foreign policy and military strategy. And Tokyo would likewise be wise to contemplate how relations will be altered when a regime truly representative of American interests does finally recapture the White House.

A second recent factor that should cause a reappraisal of Ishihara's work is the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and how this will affect what he—in the most controversial portion of his book—called Japan's ability to play the "technology card." He reminds his American readers that Japan is not only now strong enough technologically and financially to take its place as a world military power, but that America's entire nuclear arsenal now depends on Japanese microchips.

A deal with the Soviet Union over semiconductors cannot be completely ruled out. As I have noted, microchips determine the accuracy of weapons systems and are the key to military power. U.S. strategists count on Japan's ability to mass produce quality chips. Yet some Japanese businessmen believe that if Moscow returns the Northern Territories, we should terminate the security treaty and become neutral. They hope Japan would then receive exclusive rights to develop Siberia.

Ishihara, in fact, boldly calls the next century the Age of the Pacific, and does not rule out a new kind of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere governed by Tokyo and extending as far as the economically needy countries of Eastern Europe. Though he admits that "playing the leading man" in world affairs has lately been "out of character" for Japan, he reminds his countrymen that "stage fright will keep us in the wings forever." After all, he concludes—and Washington take heed—Japan's "long history and rich culture have prepared us for the limelight."

At another point in *Rising Sun*, Senator John Morton lambastes free traders who contend that it does not matter where companies are located or where products are made, whether America is a producer of potato chips or computer chips, and who see national economies as "old fashioned and out of date. To these

people, I say—Japan doesn't think so. Germany doesn't think so. The most successful countries in the world today maintain strong national policies. . . . They nourish their industries, protect them against unfair competition from abroad. . . . But if we continue as we are, mouthing the ancient platitudes of a free market economy, disaster awaits us." Senator Morton, of course, is a fictional character, but his ideas are alive and well in the latest book by the Educational Foundation of the U.S. Business and Industrial Council.

America Asleep is destined to become the economic manifesto of the America First movement, and a more thorough discussion of free trade and protectionism and of their historical antecedents in American politics is nowhere to be found. The book is a series of ten essays by leftists, rightists, journalists, and economists, and it is edited by USBIC President John Cregan and has a foreword by Pat Buchanan. The essays are factual and polemically powerful and will doubtless leave all readers—friend and foe alike—convinced of the new nationalists' commitment and resolve. It is indeed, as Pat Buchanan concedes in his foreword, "the international hour of President Bush. But he is leaning against a nationalist wind that will soon reach gale force."

Economist William Hawkins has an informative essay on the historical roots of free-trade ideology. He convincingly argues two points: first, that nations throughout history that have relied exclusively on trade and not on the strength of their own productive capabilities built their national castles on volatile sand—such as 17th-century Spain that fell to the Dutch, and the 18th-century Dutch who fell prey to the mercantilist policies of England; and secondly, that free-trade ideology evolved from classical liberalism of the 19th century that separated economics from politics, power from wealth, and viewed not national interests but only "citizens of the world." He argues that this historical perspective is important because, as historian Charles Wilson has noted, the current tendency overseas is "to revert to conditions which in some ways resemble those of the seventeenth century rather than those of the nineteenth."

This refusal to acknowledge the openly mercantilist policies of our trading partners abroad is what John Cregan in his introductory essay terms "ostrich economics"—"an excuse to keep our col-

lective heads buried in the comforting sands of theory." Longtime Republican Party organizer Helen Delich Bentley echoes Mr. Cregan and shows in her essay how such theory is tied to the "Gospel According to [Adam] Smith." Former International Trade Commission member Alfred Eckes complements Mr. Hawkins' analysis of free trade with an essay on "Reviving the Old Paradigm," delineating the historical roots and champions of American protectionism from Henry Clay and his "American System" to Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and, ironically enough, President Bush's own father, Connecticut Senator Prescott Bush.

Chronicles contributing editor and *Washington Times* syndicated columnist Samuel Francis traces the ways in which free-trade dogma fits into the larger cultural picture of globalism, transnationalism, and open-border ideology that threaten American sovereignty and national security. The irony, he writes, is that "at the very moment when the Soviet Union . . . is in a condition of collapse, the United States itself is encountering a profound challenge to its very existence as a sovereign and independent nation-state. . . ." This threat to American sovereignty and national security is also taken up by Kevin Kearns, a fellow at the Economic Strategy Institute and a former director of the State Department's Office of Defense Trade Policy, and by Edward Walsh, senior editor of *Sea Power* and a former research director for the USBIC. Mr. Kearns discusses the "un-holy alliance" of neoclassical economists, free-trade ideologues, and lobbyists for foreign interests that thwarts any attempt to check the further deterioration of America's high-tech industrial base, while Mr. Walsh highlights what he calls our "technology drain," our diminishing share of the world market in such crucial areas as robotics, microlithography, and electronic semiconductors (which the Defense Department has classified as essential to 13 of its 20 most critical technologies).

Businessman Boone Pickens, as the largest shareholder in Koito, a member of Toyota's *keiretsu* family, provides an enlightening firsthand account of Japanese cartels. These economic megapyramids known as *keiretsus* are illegal in the United States as they violate our antitrust laws. But as a character in *Rising Sun* describes them, to get a feel for what *keiretsus* are like "imagine an association of IBM and Citibank and Ford and Exxon,

all having secret agreements among themselves to cooperate, and to share financing and research." Mr. Pickens recounts how the Japanese have tried to keep him off the corporate board; how he must contribute to the fees that Koito pays to American lobbyists who are working in Washington to keep him off the board; how they refuse to show him the corporate tax records; how Toyota sells the Lexus at below cost in America in an attempt not to win profits but to gain market share, and how Japan can afford to do this in numerous industries because of the financial security that *keiretsus* provide. The price of the Lexus may be low now, he warns, but "when enough market share has been acquired, that price is going to go up. And GM, Ford and Chrysler are losing market share so quickly that it is scary."

In *These Times* and *New Republic* editor John Judis, and former president of the USBIC, Anthony Harrigan, discuss the politics of the current debate over national economic strategies. As Mr. Judis discovered while researching his landmark 1989 exposé on Japanese lobbying, the exact composition of the "Japan lobby" is difficult to categorize because it creates some strange economic and political bedfellows. He nonetheless clearly separates the various factions, and traces as well how

World War II and the Cold War caused fissures over free trade on both the left and the right. Anthony Harrigan concentrates on the revolving-door network between U.S. government officials and the foreign lobbyist community and highlights many of the Beltway's "conservative" think tanks:

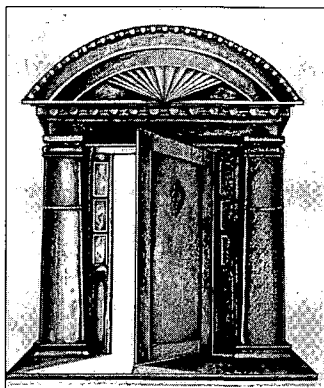
Conservative and libertarian think tanks such as the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute continue to grind out statements that insist that everything is wonderful. Many of the conservative think tanks, to be sure, are recipients of massive financial grants from Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese and European interests. Many conservative think tanks now have a tremendous vested interest in defending foreign commercial entities.

The "old national interest American public philosophy," concludes Mr. Harrigan, "has been abandoned by these self-styled conservatives."

* * *

In Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* the squire Jöns says to his master, "For ten years we sat in the Holy Land and let the snakes bite us, insects prick us, wild an-

imals rip us, heathens slaughter us . . . fevers consume us, all to the glory of God. . . . Our crusade was so stupid that only an intellectual could have invented it." What an apt description of America's current economic plight. In plain face of our lost industrial base, mounting foreign debt, and increasing vulnerability to technological blackmail, only Ivory Tower pundits entirely removed from reality or politicians and think-tank lackeys on the take from foreign nationals could be indifferent to the parasitical trade practices debilitating our body politic for the greater glory of the Free Trade God. Richard Nixon recently chastised America for not giving Russia sufficient foreign aid in its time of social and economic need, warning that fifty years hence we may well be debating "Who lost Russia?" as we debated "Who lost China?" in the 1950's. But with free trade, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and unlimited immigration reigning supreme, it is doubtful whether America will have the luxury in the next century of debating Russia's socioeconomic state. The pressing question of the day will be who lost Detroit, Miami, Los Angeles, and that erstwhile republic known as the United States of America. ◊



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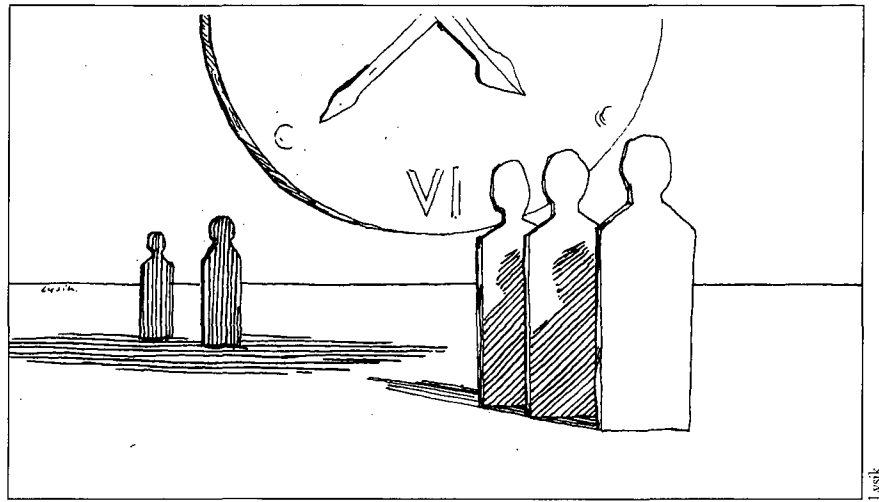
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XPD24

The Sentimentalist Conspiracy

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

"Actum est de republica."
—Latin saying



Peaceful Invasions: Immigration and Changing America

by Leon F. Bouvier

Washington, D.C.: Center for Immigration Studies; 234 pp., \$45.00

The Bourgeois Age is finished, but a principal feature of Victorianism—the fullest and most developed expression of that era—still flourishes. Postmoderns consider themselves a hardheaded and realistic people, yet the average American today is probably as much a sentimentalist as the typical Dickens reader of a century ago. Sentimentality—not racism, greed, or sensuality—is the definitive vice of the American people at the end of the 20th century as it was at the close of the 19th, but it has undergone a change in emphasis over the past hundred years. In Dickens' time, the object of sentimental feeling was still the individual—Little Nell and Tiny Tim—while in our own day it is the group—The Poor, The Homeless, Minorities, Gays, The Differently Abled, The Third World. The evening news programs are the brief emotional equivalent of *Little Dorrit* and *Oliver Twist*, whose producers engage in every tear-jerking device known to their horrible trade short

Chilton Williamson, Jr. is senior editor for books at Chronicles.

of actually holding up cue cards that say CRY. Of course, the individual case is meant to personalize the plight of the group, just as Dickens' novels intentionally pointed at social conditions lying beyond personal experience. Still, the Christian Victorians recognized in suffering a personal meaning that has become attenuated for the secular post-moderns, for whom pain and misery are more or less abstract manifestations of social dislocation. Add to the sociological temptation the susceptibility to sentimentality and fantasy encouraged and exploited by the creators of popular culture and the inability of the American public school system to graduate people able to think and to reason, and the result is public debate waged overwhelmingly by crass and unapologetic sentimentalists.

Rationalist liberals and New York and Washington "conservatives" enjoy a good time with sentimentally pious rightists who preferred their country when it was a republic to what it has become as an empire, yet at no time does their own brand of sentimentality betray, itself so obviously as when they insist that the United States, being "a nation of immigrants," must continue to hold its doors open to newcomers from abroad. Leon F. Bouvier, a demographer associated with Tulane University and formerly vice-president at the Population Reference

Bureau, as well as a member of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy in 1980, is a self-proclaimed liberal who believes in what he calls a "liberal-limitationist" approach to a subject that could be called inflammable if it were not so unpopular as to be scarcely visible at all.

Professor Bouvier has four discrete arguments to make on behalf of setting a limit of 450,000 legal immigrants annually to the United States (the current number is 950,000) and of reducing illegal immigration to a trickle. The first is that the American underclass, which is proportionately larger than that of any other industrialized nation, is expanding in spite of the reduced national fertility rate and as a direct result of increased immigration quotas that add great numbers of predominantly young and unskilled aliens to the work force, thus aggravating a situation caused by the gap between employers' need for educated workers and the relatively small number of skilled workers available. The second is that high levels of immigration are retarding the modernization, and therefore the competitiveness, of American industry by creating a large pool of unskilled labor from which businesses can draw low-paid workers in preference to investing in technological development that would reduce the need for cheap labor

while increasing their efficiency and competitiveness, as well as, finally, their profitability. The third is that immigrants in their current numbers make assimilation into American society unlikely if not impossible, absent a curtailment of the present influx such as halted the three previous waves of immigration to the United States. Fourth, Bouvier makes the crucial but rarely stated case for the necessity of protecting the country's limited space, unlimited beauty, and precious natural resources from the impact of scores and, eventually, hundreds of millions of people; demographers' worst-case predictions envisage an American population of a half-billion people before 2060 and no end to human increase in sight, compared with 316 million (no further growth expected) by 2050 if immigration is held to the 450,000 per annum advocated by Bouvier and the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy. Bouvier effectively counters the assertion made by optimist-alarmists like Ben Wattenberg that the country will shortly face a paralyzing shortage of warm manageable bodies, and answers the nation-of-immigrants cant by replying that the United States no longer requires brute manpower in great quantities, and by citing the warning of Arnold Toynbee that the processes that create and develop institutions typically end by destroying them.

Professor Bouvier is correct in identifying the immigration question as a crucial one for the 1990's, since decisions made—or not made—in the coming decade will determine irreversible social, political, and economic developments for the next century and beyond. Which prompts one to ask why we are not hearing more concerning this issue. Alone among the candidates to bring up the subject in this election year is Pat Buchanan, who has outraged the keepers of public opinion by expressing a preference for British over Ethiopian immigrants, and advocated digging a ditch on the Southwest border. Outrage, however, has failed to produce debate but only insult from such public figures as William Bennett and Rich Bond, who exemplify the truth that charges of racism have become the last (or is it the first?) refuge of scoundrels and who lack the fundamental honesty and courage to engage in reasoned argument on the subject, preferring instead to smear those who display such courage. Under the circumstances that constrain public discourse in

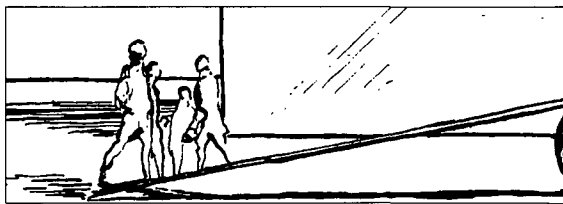
this country, Buchanan's remarks have fallen like pebbles tossed into a deep well. None of the Democratic candidates has had a word to say about immigration.

Why this neglect of what ought to be a major issue in American politics at the end of the 20th century? The polls have shown for years that an overwhelming majority of voters favors reducing substantially the number of people accepted for residency in this country, and it seems inexplicable that one or more politicians, whether brave or simply vote-hungry, should not have seized on the question long ago—as Le Pen has in France—to embarrass Congress, which remains steadfastly oblivious to the problems posed by tens of millions of “peaceful invaders.” Bouvier's explanation for Washington's studied indifference to majoritarian sentiment is that the anti-immigrationists are unorganized and that, with certain regional exceptions, the subject is not of primary importance to Americans; consequently, politicians feel secure in ignoring their concern as they do not in opposing the far more intense emotions of the antitax, pro-abortion, and pro-immigration lobbies.

So far so good, yet to place the blame for America's irresponsible handling of the

immigration crisis on the workings of politics-as-usual is to ignore the extent to which unexamined assumptions have come to overlie the more mundane preoccupations of what Mark Twain called “America's only native criminal class.” If Pat Buchanan cannot get a national argument going over immigration, it is because the two national political parties think alike on the question, as in fact they do on a great many—perhaps even most—others. Mencken's characterization of an American presidential election as “a deafening, nervewracking battle to the death between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, Harlequin and Sganarelle, Gobbos and Dr. Cook” is a great deal more true today than it was at the time of writing in the early decades of this century. The Republican Party is the complementary half of the walnut whose other half is the Democratic Party; together, they comprise the political establishment of the corporate megastate to which each is unshakably devoted. One half of the walnut is sympathetic to capitalist corporatism, the other to socialist corporatism; one has tender regrets for “traditional values,” the other anticipatory admiration for sodomy and other forms of perversion, particularly feminism; one courts the destruction of the natural world in the name of progress, the other

LIBERAL ARTS



A BOILING—NOT MELTING—POT

Hundreds of marchers staged a rally in Santa Barbara, California, “chanting slogans of Chicano power,” reported the *Santa Barbara News-Press* last February. “One of the reasons we're here right now is to show people we can take those streets any time we want them,” said Rudy Acuña, a Chicano leader who was denied a faculty position in the Chicano Studies program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, last summer. The rally was dedicated to the memory of Luis Urzua, member of a radical Chicano group. Don Dubay, a UCSB administrator, called the event “democracy in action,” and Shirley Kennedy, a lecturer in black studies at UCSB, urged the marchers to run for political office, saying “The 21st century will be ours.”

er flirts with the wisdom of Deep Ecology which holds that man is a coequal element of nature. Between the two parties there is in fact a difference of sorts, but it is the difference between the creative department of a national advertising agency and the accounting one. Without the Democratic counterbalance, the Republicans would inaugurate Donald Trump as President, strip-mine the Grand Canyon, and make a killing on Wall Street by selling time-shared condominiums built on the remains to unsuspecting Japanese investors; without the Republicans looking over their shoulders, the Democrats would nominate Anita Hill for the presidency, confer voting rights on trees, and include Pet Rocks among the delegates to their national conventions. While there may occasionally be a compelling reason for rightists to vote for the Republican candidate in an election, there is no reason at all for them to wish, as New York "conservatives" do, for the domination of the state and federal governments by the Republican Party. There is really only one good reason for voting for the candidate of either of the two national parties, and that is in order to cancel out the candidate of the other.

The fact that the Republican Party establishment is unwilling to argue the immigration question in public proves in what degree it has become simply another

arm of the managerial state, a cheerful experimenter willing to give the concept of the First Universal Nation a try at the expense of what little remains of the old American Republic. The word "Republican," in other words, as applied to the party of Bush, Kemp, and Bennett—the prematurely undeclared Republican candidate in 1996—is one of the great misnomers of American history, to say nothing of the term "conservative" or "rightist." When Gramsci wrote of the susceptibility of conservative programs to gradual co-optation by progressive ones, he was foretelling with great accuracy the direction of American politics in the 20th century. "Ideology" is an awful word, pretentious and essentially meaningless. For that reason, I do not hesitate to apply it to another pretentious and idiotic thing, namely the idea of the First Universal Nation that the Republican Party refuses to gag at, like a too-polite guest at a banquet of salmonella-infected delicacies.

Ideology is tortuously rationalized and elaborated sentiment based on nothing more than the determination that fantasy should be forcibly converted to fact. It is not surprising, therefore, that a society as sentimental as ours should have capitulated not just to the most gigantic piece of sentimentalist ideology since the Tower of Babel, but to the peculiar

cowardice that sentimentalism always produces. Sentimentalism in decadent cultures always pays; and the question that America needs to ask itself in the 1990's is not whether we are a nation of laws or of men, but whether we have a government of men or of George Bush, Bill Bennett, and Jack Kemp.

If sentimentalism is a sin, it belongs to the category of sins of indulgence which today, in the twilight of the Democratic Age, so often take the form in public men of self-submergence in the conviction of their own compassionate wisdom and enlightenment, together with an unwillingness to examine the stark and unsentimental truth. Is there another explanation for the Bush administration's readiness to spend tens of billions of dollars constructing a missile farm in the middle of an antelope pasture in South Dakota, while budgeting a couple of hundred million to beef up the U.S. Border Patrol? Or for its insistence that it is feasible to cover the continent with an antiballistic screen, but not feasible to control our border, as every other country in the world controls its own? Meanwhile, the Democratic-Republican Party expects us to lie awake fretting about incoming warheads from Libya, Iraq, and Kazakhstan, and to ignore the millions of peaceful invaders, legal and illegal, tiptoeing past our windows in the dead of night. ☐

GREAT TOPICS, GREAT ISSUES

Faces of Eve: Goddess, Starlet, Poetess—March 1992—Janet Scott Barlow on the devolution of women on the screen, Thomas Fleming on marriage as the real right to privacy, and R.S. Gwynn on American women poets. Plus Betsy Clarke on the politics of rape, Anne Marie Morgan on the new technology of fertility control, Kenneth Craycraft on Mary Ann Glendon's *Rights Talk*, and a short story by Kit Reed.

The Spanish Americas—April 1992—Richard Estrada on the Hispanic contributions to American culture, Mario Vargas Llosa on the difficult rise of the Latin American novel, Chilton Williamson, Jr. on bullfighting in Juárez, Mexico, and poems by Jorge Luis Borges. Plus Brad Linaweaver on Albert Jay Nock, William Murchison on LBJ, and Murray Rothbard on violence in New York City.

Law and Order: Crime and Punishment—May 1992—Thomas Fleming on the role of the executioner, Philip Jenkins on the drug war and personal liberties, Graeme Newman on the case for corporal punishment, and Theodore Pappas on vigilante justice. Plus Murray Rothbard on street crime, Llewellyn Rockwell on vagrancy law, Richard Irving on taxi drivers and minority crime, and a firsthand account of life in prison.

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From a Front Box by James W. Tuttleton

Henry Adams: Selected Letters

Edited by Ernest Samuels

Cambridge: Harvard University Press;
612 pp., \$29.95

Only the most devoted students of Henry Adams are likely to have bought and read the six-volume *Complete Letters* that Harvard University Press produced between 1982 and 1988. More's the pity, since it was an excellent work of scholarship disclosing an American epistolary artist of the highest order. But the editor and biographer, Ernest Samuels, has now given us a manageable one-volume selection of 240 letters spanning the 60-year period from 1858-1918. And what a collection it is—nearly every one a gem.

Adams's correspondents included his famous family, of course, but many other recipients likewise had a recognized place in the literary, political, scientific, and social life of his time—including Charles Eliot Norton, Charles Milnes Gaskell, Henry Cabot Lodge, John Hay, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles W. Eliot, William and Henry James, Elizabeth Cameron, and Theodore Roosevelt. But even if some of the recipients were not themselves luminaries of the great world, Adams's letters are so full of shrewd and entertaining comments on important personalities and developments in his time that we cannot do without a single one of them. And, needless to say, the collection offers an unfolding autobiography, of sorts, of one of the most brilliant and complicated men of his time.

Descending as he did from a line of American Presidents, Henry Adams expected that his father, Congressman Charles Francis Adams, would likewise ascend to the White House. And who could doubt that he himself might in due course follow? The theme of *The Education of Henry Adams*, privately published in 1907, was to be the failure of his education in politics, law, science, literature, and society to prepare him for the life of his time. But in 1858, at age 20, he wrote

to his brother that he had "a theory that an educated and reasonably able man can make his mark if he chooses. . . . But if I know myself, I can't fail." The family chaffed with him about a life in politics; and he chaffed back in telling his mother in 1860 that "As for having the 'Presidency' in view I hardly think it's desirable with the present occupant's fate before one's eyes [a hostile Congress was investigating President Buchanan's 'abuse' of federal patronage]; I aspire to the leadership in the lower House and the Departments." Yet he knew himself to be most adapted to "literary pursuits," and given his family's importance, he decided at the beginning that what he had to write would have historical significance. In an 1860 letter to his brother—written from Washington, where he was serving as private secretary to his father—he remarks:

I propose to write you this winter a series of private letters to show how things look. I fairly confess that I want to have a record of this winter on file, and though I have no ambition nor hope to become a Horace Walpole, I still would like to think that a century or two hence when everything else about us is forgotten, my letters might still be read and quoted as a memorial of manners and habits at the time of the great secession of 1860. At the same time you will be glad to hear all the gossip and to me it will supply the place of a Journal.

The allusion to Walpole is not insignificant. Taken together, Adams's nearly 3,000 letters are the mirror of his age, a compendium of gossip, and the equivalent of a journal recording his impressions of friends and family, political and social developments, travels, and travails. Because he expected them to be published, the letters of this child of the Puritans are not as intimate as those of other writers like James Joyce or Henry James. But reading between the lines—in the light of others' memoirs, *The Education*, his histories, and the novels *Democracy* and *Esther*—Adams's account of political life in

the London embassy during the Civil War, of his wife's social brilliance in Grant's Washington, of his South Sea travels, of his long platonic widower's relationship with Elizabeth Cameron (the wife of a senator)—these give the volume a deeply personal as well as historical dimension.

What is surprising to discover is that the famous irony and self-deprecation were there from the very beginning. In 1863 he tells his brother Charles Francis that all of his readings in science and philosophy confirm his belief in "our own impotence and ignorance. In this amusement, I find, if not consolation, at least some sort of mental titillation." Later he responds to William James's argument for free will by remarking to him that "A few hundred men represent the entire intellectual activity of the whole thirteen hundred million. What then? . . . Not one of them has ever got so far as to tell us a single vital fact worth knowing. We can't prove even that we are."

After his beloved wife Clover committed suicide in 1885, Adams was thereafter silent about the matter. He told Lord Curzon in 1906 that "I cannot talk of her. . . . Some visions are too radiant for words. When they fade, they leave life colorless. I do not understand how we bear such suffering as we do when we lose them; but we have to be silent, for no expression approaches the pain." Adams thereafter launched on worldwide wanderings. His letters to Elizabeth Cameron are rich in descriptions, reflections, and observations about the South Seas, European society, and American life beyond the muddy Beltway. Wealthy and famous, he was always the object of matchmakers, but as he told Lucy Baxter in 1890,

You all abominate second marriages, yet you all conspire to bring them about. I receive admonitions constantly on the subject, and am aware that my friends take an active interest in selecting a victim to sacrifice to my selfishness. I do not care to interfere with their search. My only precaution is to show a pro-

nounced attachment to married women; so as to preclude any attachment that could cause a rumor or other ties. It would be useless and impossible to argue the matter, or to give reasons for preferring solitude soul to solitude à deux; but the reasons are sufficiently strong, and if I ever should act in a contrary sense, it would be because I should have begun to lose my will, and was in the first stages of imbecility. Just now my only wish is to escape from the dangers that remain in life with the least possible noise and suffering.

In fact, he called the period after 1885 his "posthumous" existence and never remarried.

It was doubtless a blow to Adams that the nation never drafted him for President by acclamation. Yet the letters to his friend John Hay, Secretary of State under Presidents McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt, show his vicarious sense of political power and are rich in ruminations touching the imperial ambitions of Russia, Germany, France, and England. But with Hay's death in 1905, he remarked that "I've no longer any concern in politics." Gradually this historian sunk himself in the Middle Ages, so he prepared *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (1904). Still, as he told Anne Palmer Fell in 1901, "though I am glad to be through with it, and to have no more responsibility for the universe, I find it still very amusing to look at, from a front box. The spectacle does not lose its interest. Far from it! What a fascinating melodrama it is, when one has time to think; and what do the Kaiser and the Czar and Edward VII and Pierpont Morgan think of it? I presume that Marian can tell you, since she was born to it. As I was born in the year 1138, I

don't catch on."

The Education was meant to focus what he thought of the meaningless spectacle of life in his time; and, to Henry James, he called the autobiography "a mere shield of protection in the grave. I advise you to take your own life in the same way, in order to prevent biographers from taking it in theirs." However "suicidal" the writing of autobiography may be, the letters of Henry Adams give us the living man; and, for all the irritations of his continuous irony, he is well worth knowing in this correspondence.

James W. Tuttleton is a professor of English at New York University.

The Conservative Roots of Conservation

by Nelson Van Valen

Frederick Billings: A Life

by Robin W. Winks

New York: Oxford University Press;
424 pp., \$27.95

New York Times junkies would have noticed an August 28, 1991, story headed "Woodstock Journal." Reading on they discovered that the story was datelined Woodstock, Vermont, and that it reported a proposal by Laurance S. and Mary Rockefeller to donate their 531-acre Woodstock estate as a National Historical Park. Although the Rockefeller family has a generations-long tradition of adding to the national park system, the story was not one of dog bites man. The estate includes the two-centuries-old mansion that was the birthplace of George

Perkins Marsh, author in 1864 of *Man and Nature: Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, which in Lewis Mumford's frequently quoted words was "the fountainhead of the conservation movement in America." In 1869, Marsh sold the estate—the only time it has ever been sold—to a lifelong admirer, Frederick Billings. Mary Rockefeller is Billings' granddaughter.

Although a principal American railroad builder and pioneer conservationist, Frederick Billings has lacked a scholarly biography. Robin W. Winks, having gained permission from the Rockefeller family to consult the records in the Billings Archives, has admirably filled that gap. Before launching his railroad career, Billings sought his fortune in gold-rush California. He arrived in San Francisco in the spring of 1849 and took not to the gold fields but to law and real estate. He was the first attorney in San Francisco to hang out his shingle and was a founding partner in what became California's principal law firm. Specializing in litigation of disputed land claims—a lucrative field in gold-rush California—Billings used his fees and his knowledge of dubious land titles to buy real estate. He also, with his partners, constructed the Montgomery Block, the city's most attractive office complex. As soon as his increasing wealth could support the role, Billings the attorney-businessman was joined by Billings the philanthropist. Public education (especially school libraries), religion, and parks and scenic landscapes became lifelong areas of special interest. He was a major figure in both the founding of the University of California and the preservation of Yosemite Valley as, in effect, a state-run national park.

Yet Billings continued to sign himself "Frederick Billings of Woodstock," and his California years did indeed prove only to be an extended sojourn. In the mid-1860's he returned to the East Coast and bought into "the single greatest American corporate undertaking of the 19th century," the Northern Pacific Railroad, becoming its largest single stockholder and president. He made two, closely related, lifesaving contributions to the railroad. In the aftermath of the Panic of 1873—largely precipitated by Jay Cooke's mis-handling of Northern Pacific finances—Billings carried through a reorganization that made survival possible. Equally crucial, he revitalized the railroad's land office, and income from the increased land sales made the reorganization feasible.

LIBERAL ARTS



DANCES WITH DAYS

Columbus Day was struck from the calendar in Berkeley, California, and renamed Indigenous Peoples Day, reported the *Chicago Tribune* last March. Floyd Red Crow Westerman of the movie *Dances With Wolves* hailed the decision, saying "we feel lucky to have survived these 500 years since Columbus."

Billings' move, therefore, from the West Coast and law to the East Coast and railroads was not a radical new departure. As Winks observes, "What Billings knew best was land law," and "railroad companies were, in fact, land companies." Addressing the standard question about the business giants of the Gilded Age—were they "Robber Barons" or "Industrial Statesmen"?—Winks' answer for the railroad builders is a little bit of both. Billings, however, despite a few small warts (real estate promotion is inherently risky to the promoter's moral health), unquestionably belongs in the second category; he is a "hero of capitalism."

The bandwagon labeled "Pioneers of American Conservation" has in recent years become increasingly crowded. Among the old, familiar riders—naturalists and foresters, novelists and essayists, politicians and publicists—are unfamiliar newcomers such as sportsmen and military men, artists and scientists. To this lengthening manifest Winks would add yet another name, the businessman—or at least a businessman—Frederick Billings. He showed an interest in conservation throughout his life and devoted his last years to it "almost wholly." Yet Billings was, as Winks makes clear, a conservationist "by the light of his day." Not only was he untroubled by such present-day questions of deep ecology as "Do rocks have rights?" but he died in 1890, before the controversy over definition that produced the conservation schism had fully developed. Hence, without much sense of inner conflict, he could be both preservationist "nature-lover" and utilitarian "wise-user." He worked for the preservation of the natural wonders of Yosemite, served on the Vermont Forestry Commission, and demonstrated reforestation, scientific management, and sustained yield on his Woodstock estate. Yet like his mentor Marsh, Billings was in the end an intelligent manipulator of nature. In Winks' words, "Love of landscape . . . was not enough. . . . Nature would need help." St. Benedict, not St. Francis, was the patron saint of conservation.

Winks' biography of Frederick Billings brings a much-needed reminder to conservatives: pioneer conservationists were not exclusively early-day, left-wing "radical environmentalists" pursuing the "hidden agenda" of destroying private enterprise. Conservation was not, and is not, inherently "anti-business," and Billings' life provided repeated instances of what Winks calls "the alliance of commerce

and conservation." Rereading Marsh toward the end of his life, Billings was convinced that "conservation was the highest form of efficiency." It is time for conservatives to regain the leadership role in the conservation movement that Billings pioneered more than a century ago.

Nelson Van Valen is a retired professor of history living in Belen, New Mexico.

The Cultural Middleman

by Thomas Fleming

Daydreams and Nightmares:
Reflections of a Harlem Childhood

by Irving Louis Horowitz
Jackson: University Press of
Mississippi; 116 pp., \$18.95

♦

To start with, the process of Americanization began at birth. Within the space of one week at the Metropolitan Hospital, I started life as a Hebrew child, with the name Yitzhak-Isaac. This apparently was too cumbersome for record-keeping purposes, so I was entered on the birth certificate as Isadore. But my sister, or at least so she told me, thought that name was far too Europeanized for a Harlem baby, so I became Irving by the seventh day. Louis is an affectation of my late teens—there had to be some way to distinguish myself from all the other Irvings who lived in the Bronx and Brooklyn."

So begins Irving Horowitz's remarkable memoir of growing up Jewish in Harlem. Readers be warned. This is no Neil Simon tale of adoring parents and precocious kids. The Horowitzes were not a happy family. The socialist father, who deserted the Czar's army but nourished dreams of a Soviet Yiddish state, displayed no affection toward his family. Without the skills to succeed in the garment trade, he set up a key and lock shop in Harlem on the sound theory that such a business would do well in a high-crime area. The author gives us the impression that when his parents were not quarreling with each other or beating the children, they were staying one step ahead of their black neighbors. During Christmas season the family worked the bulb scam: unsuspecting black cus-

tomers would bring in their bulbs for a test that usually revealed the lights to be defective. "When the same bulbs were retested after the customer left, they almost always were found to be perfect. . . . My father placed them into inventory and resold them as new."

But if the Horowitzes picked up a few dollars with such tricks, the whole of Harlem, black and white, was devoted to the hustle, and young Irving goes from sneaking money from his father's cash drawer to manipulating ticket sales at the Polo Grounds to running numbers and scalping tickets. What training for a political sociologist!

More than anything this is the story of a Jewish boy with a cleft palate making it the hard way on the streets of Harlem. After the great Harlem riot in which the family business is sacked, the Horowitzes move to pleasanter quarters in a Jewish section of Brooklyn. The young Horowitz—"a Jew with heavy traces of a black sharecropper's accent"—brought Harlem with him to Brooklyn. His new classmates regarded him, not without reason, as a bully, and he got into real trouble with his one attempt to imitate the sexual mores of Harlem by attacking a girl whom he had never met. When all hell broke loose, he "kept wondering why Harlem kids seemed to manage sexual intercourse without incurring the wrath of parents and other authorities." During his period of in-school suspension, he begins to see life from the principal's perspective, and it took the tough-minded teachers of PS 193 only one term to turn him into a kid who would grow up to be a major American social theorist and the proprietor of a major academic press.

Even more interesting than Irving Horowitz's personal story are his observations on the difficult relations between blacks and Jews. Like many Jewish kids, Horowitz was as fond of the blacks' music as he was terrified of their unrestrained behavior. If blacks envied Jews for their particles of economic success in the 1930's, some Jews had a sneaking admiration for black creativity. However, "the majority of Jews, for their part, saw this flirtation with black culture as nothing short of a desecration of Jewish life—an early warning signal that sexuality would displace marriage and undiluted individual expression would destroy family solidarity."

But for all the ambiguities of the relationship, suggests Horowitz, it was a black-Jewish partnership that to a great

extent created modern American pop culture. "Even in the supreme black achievement of jazz . . . Jewish musicians—Goodman, Gershwin, Mezzrow, and Whiteman among others—not only played the music, but also served as critics and interpreters. In a racially controlled prewar America, it was the Jew who popularized black life, transforming a folk tradition into an art mode." Blacks, who "saw their uniqueness compromised" by this cultural appropriation, inevitably resented Jewish success, believing that "the gain and fame of their culture went to the accursed Jewish cultural middleman, while the purity of their performance remained undersupported and undernourished." But it is doubtful that black cultural forms would ever have enjoyed their triumph without the help of the "cultural middlemen" who made it acceptable for white audiences.

In making these observations, Horowitz has displayed considerable courage. The ethnic roots of American culture are buried under tons of official mythology, the slag of the melting-pot ideology, and given the choice between truth and legend, most writers and publishers will always "print the legend." The childhood portrayed in *Daydreams and Nightmares* is a gritty little piece of reality, the irritant from which pearls are made.

Thomas Fleming is the editor of *Chronicles*.

A Writer for All Seasons

by George Core

Orwell: The Authorized Biography
by Michael Sheldon
New York: HarperCollins;
497 pp., \$25.00

E.B. White described Henry David Thoreau, that thorny individualist, as a regular hair shirt of a man; and no matter how much we may like the Thoreau of *Walden* and his other writing, few of us could bear having him as a neighbor. Such, too, is the case of Eric Blair, who would become George Orwell; but who, regardless of his name, was from boyhood a difficult and complicated human being, one probably far more likable on

paper than in person.

When we learn something like the whole story of Blair's passage through St. Cyprian's School in southwest England, we are much more inclined to see the side of the embattled headmaster and his aggressive wife than we are in reading Orwell's "Such, Such Were the Joys," an essay that may turn any of us against all boarding schools. Orwell, in looking back, viewed his as a microcosm of the totalitarian state. However imperfect most of them are, the worst seldom rival, say, the Third Reich or the Soviet Union for exquisite brutality levied against minorities and protesters and all others out of step with phalanx of jackboots marching down the main thoroughfare of the state.

George Orwell, as Samuel Hynes has observed, was not a great writer in the sense that he forged an overmastering book or permanently affected any literary mode, even the essay, of which he was the most brilliant practitioner in English in our century. But Orwell made a greater impact on general culture and the common man than any other English writer in our century except Winston Churchill and perhaps H.G. Wells. He did so by a gritty and unflinching pursuit of the truth as a writer and political thinker that makes even megalomaniacs and monomaniacs seem laggards by comparison.

This compulsiveness sometimes diverted Orwell from a reasonable course in his public and private life, shunting him more nearly toward madness than sainthood. He was not simply courageous but fearless in a way that often seems insane, as Michael Sheldon makes plain in several sequences. Orwell took absurd chances in the front lines during the Spanish Civil War and was shot in the throat in consequence; later, not long before his death, he endangered the lives of a boating party by being oblivious to the perils of the situation—being at sea in an open boat that had lost its motor and that was being drawn into a whirlpool. At such moments Orwell seems a caricature drawn from a boy's adventure yarn—a figure he would have immediately recognized in another person or within the covers of a book. He was also so set on seeing the aftermath of the war in Europe that he, although seriously ill himself, was abroad when his first wife underwent surgery (and did not survive it). And, although he was devoted to her in some ways, he was not faithful to her—odd behavior for the man often called the conscience of his generation. Orwell wrecked his health for rea-

sons that seem more nearly frivolous and whimsical than anything else.

So you may emerge from reading Mr. Sheldon's strong biography feeling dashed about the person who, against very considerable odds, made himself into a fair to middling novelist, a good broadcaster for the BBC, a superb satirist, and a great essayist. Not a man for all seasons but a writer for all seasons. A writer who could stand up for common humanity and for the common toad; a writer who could celebrate the joys of ordinary life; a writer who could attack political stupidity and savagery of all stripes, whether in England or elsewhere; a writer who did more than any other in our time to uphold human decency through the medium of the written and spoken word.

The author of *Friends of Promise: Cyril Connolly and the World of "Horizon,"* Sheldon came well equipped to write a new biography of Orwell. This book, however, was not authorized by Sonia Brownell, Orwell's second wife and late widow, who did her best to prevent a biography from being written and thus carry out her husband's quixotic wishes. Sheldon does add new material to the earlier accounts of Orwell's life by Peter Stansky and William Abrahams and, more recently, Bernard Crick. Stansky and Abrahams have written two volumes that take us only to 1938; Crick's life of Orwell is more detailed but more laborious than Sheldon's. I am glad to have this faster paced and more readable life but think that the flag under which it sails—Authorized Biography—is closer to being the Jolly Roger than anything else. Anyone seriously interested in Orwell will want to read Sheldon and will be well repaid, but the serious reader should remember that much of the writing about Orwell, from George Woodcock's *The Crystal Spirit* onward, remains permanently valuable.

During the last year of his life, when he was failing rapidly from tuberculosis, Orwell pondered the meaning of Gandhi's life and reflected on ordinary human existence versus sainthood. "Sainthood is . . . a thing that human beings must avoid," he observed. He reached this conclusion after presenting the heart of the matter about our frail nature: "The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, that one is sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty, that one does not push asceticism to the point where it makes friendly intercourse impossible, and that one is pre-

pared in the end to be defeated and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other individuals." This, as Samuel Hynes has pointed out, is a good description of what Orwell himself did as a member of weltering humanity and not as a saint, which he was not.

At the same time this remarkable passage reveals why George Orwell, like E.B. White, was always the member of a party of one who lived in a time of fear but who was not too cowed to speak out. For that unfaltering courage we owe him a continuing and unpayable debt, but Michael Shelden has made a handsome payment toward that account.

George Core is editor of the Sewanee Review.

A Myth Imagined

by **Frank Brownlow**

A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture

by **Samuel Hynes**

New York: Atheneum; 514 pp., \$29.95

How quickly living tradition turns into history. The Great War of 1914-18 has almost entirely receded from memory. Very few of that generation are alive to tell their stories, and as for their children, they have their own war, the Second World War, to occupy and puzzle their memories. In the minds of the young people of our own day the two wars merge into one vaguely apprehended rumor of violence.

No doubt this is why, about twenty years ago, the First World War began to be a subject for historians and critics. The battlefields of the Western Front proved to be rich fields for scholarship. As a result, there is no shortage of information, opinion, and interpretation of that war, but it is almost entirely book-derived. The complexities of experienced memory have given place to the rather simple conventions of the researcher and writer.

Samuel Hynes' *A War Imagined* is a cultural history of England during the war of 1914-18 and the years immediately after it. The focus is chiefly upon literature, with some attention to painting, drawing, sculpture, and cinema, and even a little

to music. The range of material covered is wide. For instance, comment upon the popular writers John Buchan, Dornford Yates, "Sapper," and Warwick Deeping provides a surprising context for a reference to *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, followed in turn by a discussion of the state of women's rights after the war. A book so encyclopedically compiled is bound to include familiar material, but it is equally sure to include things that will be interesting as well as new for almost everyone. To give a few examples from my own reading of the book, I had not known that C.R. Nevinson was so powerful a draftsman, or that Sir William Orpen had such a strong vein of satire in him. I now want to see more of Orpen's pictures, and to read his memoirs as well. Hynes has also made me curious about the war memoirs of Colonel Repington. To judge from the quotations, he was an interesting man as well as a very good writer. And then there are the piquant details that any book as fat as this should supply: I am delighted to learn that Malcolm Sargent, a notorious womanizer, should have conducted the British Women's Symphony Orchestra.

Hynes's book is not all fun and discovery, however. There is a thesis organizing its materials and directing its narrative of the war's influence on English culture. It is a familiar, even a conventional one:

A generation of innocent young men, their heads full of high abstractions like Honour, Glory, and England, went off to war to make the world safe for democracy. They were slaughtered in stupid

battles planned by stupid generals. Those who survived were shocked, disillusioned, and embittered by their war experiences, and saw that their real enemies were not the Germans, but the old men at home who had lied to them. They rejected the values of the society that had sent them to war, and in doing so separated their own generation from the past and from their cultural inheritance.

Hynes repeatedly describes this thesis as a myth, a word which suggests that he might not think it true, but he hedges by defining myth as "not a falsification of reality, but an imaginative version of it." For all that, his use of the thesis suggests that he believes it. He continually repeats the idea that the war caused "a gap in time," a "radical discontinuity" with the past, which he finds exemplified by all the major work of the period, and much of the minor. For instance, he praises Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" and the "Hell Cantos" of 1925 very highly, the first as an elegy for a dead civilization, the second as an Inferno representing postwar England. He believes that Pound finally took the war seriously because, "It confirmed the corruption of English culture." In these and other passages one detects a note of agreement between Hynes and his authors. When he writes, "Hell was England-after-war—the ruin that Masterman saw, that Montague saw, that Lawrence saw, and that they all hated," it is apparent that, at least for the time being and for the purpose of writing his book, he agrees with them.

LIBERAL ARTS



PRISONS AND AIDS

An Indiana prison inmate filed a lawsuit that would "force the state to provide prisoners with condoms," the *Chicago Tribune* reported last February. Arthur Squires, a convicted burglar and sex offender, fears the effect "a high rate of homosexual activity" will have on the spread of AIDS. A spokesman for Westville prison said providing condoms would contradict existing policy that prohibits "the type of activity that spreads the AIDS virus."

The result of that unreflective acceptance of writerly authority is a conventional book that never asks the more interesting questions of its materials. Where, for instance, did Pound get his emotions about civilization and war? It is no use insisting, as the myth requires, that the experience of war must authenticate the art and poetry based on it, if we then say that Ezra Pound wrote a great war poem without ever setting foot in a trench. If he did, then the whole thesis, that it was the soldiers' unprecedented experience that created a new reality, collapses. It appears that one can get just as worked up about a "botched civilization" from reading newspapers as from suffering a bombardment—a method Pound was to employ for the rest of his career. Nor is Hynes very informative about the war poets themselves, whom he treats for the most part as passive embodiments of his thesis. One would hardly guess from his account that there was anything eccentric or personal in the backgrounds of Graves, Sassoon, or Owen that might have affected the poetry they wrote.

In short, this book confuses art and history in ways not cleared up by the evasive word "myth," and the result is not so much the history of a culture as of the development and transmission of a received idea about it. And even so, having grown up in an England that remembered the First World War very well, I'm in a position to say that as a book about the English people's understanding of the war's effect on their culture, *A War Imagined* is as wrong as many of the writers whom it quotes. It represents the opinion of a tiny minority. In my experience, even people who enjoyed the war writers' work did not always believe the version of the war presented; they accepted it as any

reader accepts a writer's fiction or personality. As for the ex-servicemen, the war had been a terrible and unique experience for them. All the ex-soldiers I knew had been in some way marked by it, but none of them believed that it was either a unique historical event, or that it had separated them from their past. In some cases it made the past more precious to them. And they all treated the silly journalistic ideas that it had been fought "to make the world safe for democracy" or "to end wars" as meaningless rant. They knew well enough they had served for king and country, as serviceable a way of putting things as any.

Very early on, too, I understood something that never surfaces in Hynes's book, that in important ways the Boer War had made a strong prior impression on that generation's imagination. The Boer War exposed the weakness of the empire, and its losses had been keenly felt. The elegiac feelings it aroused, expressed in the Waggon Hill epitaph (sneered at by Hynes), in Elgar's and Stanford's music, and in the poetry of Kipling and Newbolt, prepared and strengthened people's minds for the losses of the Great War. In fact Newbolt's "Vigil," printed as Hynes tells us in the *Times* on August 5, 1914, but written as Newbolt said "in mystical anticipation" 16 years earlier, appears in his *Collected Poems* of 1912 among poems about the Boer War. Those poems (like the soldier poems of Housman not even mentioned by Hynes) also make the contrast between pastoral England and foreign battlefields that was so basic to the best poetry of the 1914-18 war, including Siegfried Sassoon's.

Another fact not mentioned by Hynes, but relevant to his thesis, is that the American Civil War anticipated the high ca-

sualty rates of the Great War. The unpleasant realities of the American war made a strong impression in England, and that may be why *The Red Badge of Courage*, arguably the first modern war narrative, was initially more successful there than in America. What happened on the battlefields of the Great War could hardly have been a surprise to everyone in England.

The notion of "radical discontinuity" really is a myth, and like other myths it has various uses. Used by a writer like Lawrence to explain the war as a uniquely modern event, it was a self-fulfilling prophecy. After all, historical discontinuity was one of the premises of modernism. The myth also expressed the trauma and dismay of some of the men who experienced the war. In that case it conveyed an intensely personal emotion. It was certainly never a fact: the most obvious thing about postwar England was its continuity with the past. No doubt that is what so irritated the disappointed prophets of apocalypse like Pound and Lawrence. The Great War was an immense tragedy, but no more than any other event did it validate the modernist anticipation of the end of history.

After the lapse of over seventy years we can see that it is best to take longer views. History always has tricks up its sleeve. The music of Charles Villiers Stanford, for instance, whom Hynes consigns to the dead past, is now being played again. He was a kind of Anglo-Irish Dvorák, a nationalist whose style was a dialect of a common European musical language, and so, by modernist principles, unacceptable. Yet the music proves to be very good indeed, and his setting of Newbolt's "Farewell" and "The Middle Watch" are intensely felt pieces.

But one doesn't have to argue from details. In England the same classes that provided the subalterns of the first war provided the fighter pilots and junior officers of the second, and to say, as Hynes does, that they went "expecting nothing except suffering, boredom and perhaps death" misses the point of their performance just as the jingoistic formulas of 1914 misrepresent their predecessors'.

This is a book to read for its information. As a portrait of a period described by Anthony Powell as "given over to mixed and changing symbols," it is a disappointment.

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LIBERAL ARTS

L.A. GAY LAW

Law firms in major cities are stepping up efforts to recruit homosexuals, the *New York Times* reported last February. Two New York firms "have amended their anti-discrimination policies to include sexual orientation," and Munger, Tolles & Olson of Los Angeles "sends recruitment letters to gay and lesbian student groups and arranges interviews between homosexual students with gay lawyers." Bruce Deming, co-chairman of the Committee on Gay, Bisexual and Lesbian Legal Issues at Harvard Law School, "wanted to go to a place where I felt I could put a picture of my lover on my desk, take him to firm functions—where people treat you as a normal person."

Letter From Stockholm

by Allan Carlson

The Ants and Elephants of Swedish Politics

In February, I returned to Sweden after a 15-year absence, and discovered a very different land. In 1976, Americans were viewed with suspicion. We carried the immediate legacy of the Vietnam imbroglio and a vague reputation as "protofascists." These were the heady early days of Prime Minister Olaf Palme. The Swedes were, as always, polite, but they were more than a little haughty as citizens of a ruggedly independent nation, in solidarity with international socialism and the Third World. In 1992, an American strides the streets of Stockholm as a kind of king, or conqueror. With communism dead, and the Swedish economy in a swoon, capitalism is triumphant, and America looms as the center of the world, the protector of the New World Order. Swedish youth in double-breasted suits crowd around, wanting to hear about the wonders of American commercial television or the latest conservative gossip from Washington. Even the Social Democrats are humble and self-deprecating, ever willing to shine an American's ideological shoes. Only in Stockholm could I appreciate the utter mystification of James Baker and George Bush (the Swedish tabloids label them "the world's most powerful men"), who must experience in spades the same fawning adulation whenever they step beyond the American border. With the world as our oyster, they have to ask, how can the voters possibly respond to the Sirens' song of "America First"?

Most Swedes have given up on the dream of splendid neutrality and the "middle way." In retrospect, the whole notion of Swedish autonomy rested on socialist chutzpah. With foolish courage, the Swedes sought to organize the "non-aligned states" behind their leadership. The Soviet Union and the United States, they reasoned, equally threatened Swedish sovereignty. Gunnar Myrdal, Dag Hammarskjöld, and Palme wandered the globe

as prophets of a better world order based on secular moralism and a planned economy.

Alas, these dreams are all now in ruin. Sweden has been in a home-grown depression since 1989, with little likelihood of renewed growth before 1994. A huge public sector (taxes gobble up 57 percent of the Gross Domestic Product), strangling work rules, high inflation, low work effort, and fleeing capital have destroyed the old certainties. "The Social Democrats didn't know when to stop," goes the standard explanation. A smaller number cite the consequences of 60 years of welfare state incentives on notions of personal responsibility and family integrity. Among all Swedes, confidence in state-directed solutions is at a 20th-century low. Except for the aging denizens of the Left Party (formerly the Communists), everyone believes that "only the market can save us." It is also clear that the very logic of the Swedish "third way" rested on the wondrous gift of the Cold War, with its warring blocks of "Marxists" and "capitalists" leaving plenty of room for rhetorical and policy maneuvering. The end of the Soviet Empire, it seems, has been as disorienting for Swedish socialists as it has been for American conservatives.

Sweden's big political event came last September, when the Social Democrats suffered a stunning setback at the polls, their vote total falling to 37.6 percent, a level unseen since the 1920's. At the local hustings, they fared even worse: only one out of ten Swedish municipal and county councils are now under socialist control. In a nationwide straw vote of high school students, the socialists won only 16 percent. These results have shaken their confidence, with odd but interesting consequences. An acquaintance of mine who works for the Labor Movement Archive, tending the papers of Branting and other socialist heroes, despaired over cutbacks in government and party grants. I asked what the response had been. "Well, we've had to put a price on our services, create a marketing strategy, and sell our work to the individual trade unions. And we've started a fund-raising program." Alas, a specter still haunts Europe, but it has a vaguely Austrian countenance.

Nonetheless, the electoral reversal of

1991 was not enough to stimulate a fundamental rethinking of other Social Democratic positions regarding "rights," "equality," and "solidarity." The Social Democrats' historic triumphs in the 1930-68 period came in large degree as the party wrapped itself in the regalia of "nation" and "family." Their social program originated in "population policies" designed to "save the nation" through support of motherhood and large families. In the late 1960's, though, the party reoriented its message around radical individualism, a derivative of left-wing feminism that shattered lingering attachments to pre-modern sentiments. Anders Isaksson, Sweden's most thoughtful Social Democratic journalist, sees no sign of change: "equality" and a regime of "rights" mediated through the state, he told me, have irreversibly triumphed.

The election brought to power a Center-Right coalition government composed of the Moderates, the Christian Democrats, the People's Party (or Liberals), and the Center Party. Winning 21.9 percent of the vote, the Moderates placed the 42-year-old Karl Bildt in as prime minister. Closely tied to the Swedish Employers Confederation, the Moderate Party resembles our Republicans. Indeed, one right-winger describes Bildt as "a young, Swedish Bush," bound politically to international business interests, lacking other deeply held political principles, and born to parents in the public sector. His office is peopled by former associates at TIMBRO, an American-style think tank which has enjoyed uncommon success (the socialists complain bitterly about TIMBRO's infiltration of the universities). The Bildt team dresses snappily, admires the United States enormously, and looks with pleasure at the new order taking shape in Washington and Brussels.

The Moderate Party's first goal is the integration of Sweden into Western Europe. As Olof Ehrenkrona, Bildt's chief of staff, puts it, Swedish nationalism now means "a seat at Brussels." Bildt also envisions an informal linkage to the American defense umbrella, partly through a United Nations under the effective control of the U.S. State Department (as during the Persian Gulf War). A sense of destiny drives the Moderates. Their mentor

here is sociologist Hans Zetterberg, long of American residence, who spawned a party campaign document hinting that the Moderates were riding the crest of history. Turning Marx on his head, Zetterberg suggests that the old political system, resting on the 19th-century stress lines of industrialization, is breaking down, while a new system, rooting in postindustrial, conservative values, is being born. Zetterberg has recently moved to TIMBRO, where he heads a massive new social research project.

Yet the party has a few skeptics in its ranks, too. Particularly outspoken was Riksdag member Margit Gennser. A generation older than most of the Bildt team, she worries that the prime minister's advisers are "yuppies," too young and inexperienced, with an excessive attachment to social theory and technology. Citing her own hopes for reenergizing Swedish family life, she fears (shades of the Reagan coalition, circa 1981) that Bildt may have undermined the government's opportunities here by turning the Social Ministry over to the civil libertarians and by putting economics "first" on the agenda.

One of the Moderates' new coalition partners—the Christian Democratic Social Party—drew 7 percent of the vote. Founded in the mid-1960's in a protest over elimination of religious education in the schools, the party never reached the 4 percent level of support needed to enter the proportionally determined Parliament. In 1991, though, the party de-emphasized its anti-abortion message ("we'll pursue education for now, with no change in the law") and tripled its vote.

The Christian Democrats have developed a distinctive agenda, but one resting on a telling contradiction. Their basic Idea Manifesto, for example, builds on the Roman Catholic concept of subsidiarity, and urges defense of the family as the first "natural community." The party also seeks to restore traditionalist family life, through social policies encouraging marriage and children. At the same time, though, the party's voting strength lies heavily in the Pentecostal Church, where Catholic communitarianism has an alien ring. This new Swedish experiment seems to be a test of whether Pius XII and Pat Robertson can really co-exist. The question is open whether the Christian Democrats can become more than the Moderate Party's symbolic "religious wing," much as the pathetic state Lutheran Church once gave moral cov-

er to the leftist posturings of Palme. One young Christian Democratic parliamentarian believes that real party success depends on a spiritual Great Awakening in Sweden, which no one sees coming soon.

The more interesting new force in Sweden is New Democracy, the right-wing party in Parliament *not* included in the coalition government. For a decade, a populist politics has been brewing in Sweden, first seen in the political shenanigans of the Kalle Anka, or Donald Duck Party. Regional parties grew potent in Skåne, Sweden's southern region, where anti-immigration, anti-tax, and anti-Stockholm sentiments coalesced around *Skåne Partiet* and the *Sjöbö Parti*, both of which won seats in local assemblies. This ferment gave rise, in early 1991, to New Democracy, which won 7 percent of the vote six months later and holds the balance of power in Parliament, with 25 seats. Part of New Democracy's secret lies in its two leaders, Count Ian Wachtmeister and Bert Karlsson. The former is a sharp-witted aristocrat, with a gift for public speaking and humor (one Swede dubs him "Pat Buchanan with a title"). To see the party's campaign video, featuring Wachtmeister dressed as a tree and a clown, or downing a glass of champagne with his bare feet plopped in a Stockholm public fountain (illegal acts under Swedish law), all to the potent beat of the party's pop-country campaign song, is to understand the neo-anarchy of New Democracy. The party's ditty says "here comes a group which hates all paternalism," one "gathering to agitate and war against . . . bureaucracy and the welfare state, to cut taxes," and concludes: "Here comes . . . a team that will battle for a populist regime, so Sweden might breathe happier and purer air." Ehrenkrona, Bildt's chief of staff, dismisses New Democracy with a hiss, citing their use at rallies of country-western tunes as a sign of being out of touch with urbane reality. Yet he so misses the inner secret of the party's success.

The co-founder of New Democracy is Bert Karlsson. Short, burly, and buck-toothed, he is the physical antithesis of the Count. Karlsson is also a self-made millionaire, developer of Sweden's largest amusement park, and a voice for Sweden's small businessmen: the true inventors and entrepreneurs, not the managerial elites found in Sweden's cozy mega-firms. In-

deed, data shows that New Democracy's electoral base rests in the small cities and towns, among shopkeepers, the engineering shops, and the skilled craftsmen: a classic source of most populist movements. Post-election analysts also reported that about a third of New Democracy's voters were right-wing Social Democrats, with whom I had several good conversations. John Bouvin, a bulldozer driver and steel mill worker, now sits as a New Democrat in Parliament. With plebeian charm and anger, he denounces a state that seizes the majority of his income, that forced his wife—as a young mother—into the labor force, and that treats his children as state wards. A colleague, electrician Peter Kling, complains that he has worked seventy to eighty hours a week to support his wife and three young children, only to see it all taxed away. In his frustration, he once toyed with the idea of coming to the United States as an illegal immigrant (friends here assured him that it was easy), a plan vetoed by his wife. Kling also leads the New Democracy charge against the state's liquor monopoly and crushing "sin taxes," which amount to about three quarters of the price of wine or beer (not surprisingly, he reports that 40 percent of the liquor consumption in Sweden today is "on the dark side"). These men, quite simply, represent Sweden's "redneck" or "Bubba" constituency. They seek a "living wage," a wife at home with the baby, and a couple of beers after a hard day's work, all goals sharply at odds with prevailing state policy. They also believe that the Moderate Party is in thrall to corporate interests, and that it doesn't really care about people like them.

New Democracy has further mobilized support by questioning Swedish immigration and refugee policies. Looked at objectively, it's hard to imagine a system better designed to create trouble. To begin with, members of the Swedish political establishment either claim solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world or a Julian Simonish love for energetic newcomers, and generously welcome "refugees" (even though only one out of ten actually qualifies for this status under already generous United Nations standards).

Accordingly, Sweden has recently taken in twenty to forty thousand "refugees" a year, from Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, and Yugoslavia. However, rigid union work rules prohibit these new refugees from getting jobs, while bureaucratic barriers stall

decisions on permanent status for up to four years.

In the interim, the refugees receive state allowances, free housing, and endless rounds of counseling, usually in "camps" placed in economically troubled small towns. Predictably, the good Swedish burghers grow incensed over this lavish support for refugees as a new leisure class, while the latter nurse resentments over being denied the opportunity to work. The educational bureaucracy, meanwhile, has diverted vast sums into *hemspråk* schools, where immigrant children are taught in their native tongues, in service to the odd goal of a "multicultural" Sweden, another dubious American import. Indeed, it is easy to see how "refugee resettlement" has grown into a huge, self-interested bureaucracy. Binding this all together, a hysterical consensus exists in the Swedish media that any criticism of existing refugee policy constitutes racism or Nazism of the worst sort.

New Democracy is the only party with the courage to raise the issue. Its official platform is, in fact, fairly modest: give refugees a quick decision on their status; allow those accepted into the country to find jobs rather than receive a monthly allowance; provide settlement loans rather than grants; and close the *hemspråk* schools, teaching refugee children instead in the Swedish language. For these commonsense prescriptions, the party is attacked as "foreigner hating," even by Moderate Party members who know better. Undaunted, a few of the New Democrats have gone further: John Bouvin calls for a two-year hiatus in new immigration, while the country sorts out the existing mess.

A commonsense nationalism creeps into New Democracy's program in other ways. Party member Richard Uhlenberg—international engineer, filmmaker, and at age 26 the second-youngest member of Sweden's Riksdag—describes his motivation as a love for Sweden. "Just to fly the Swedish flag today is seen by many as racist, because it makes the immigrants feel bad." He noted that at a "name day" celebration which he had recently attended (a custom equivalent to a birthday), the joke was that the little Swedish flag normally placed on the breakfast tray was covered by a brown paper bag. He worries, too, about losing national identity in the looming Eurocratic sea.

This desire to save a Swedish identity might account for some of the contradictions found in New Democracy's plat-

form. On the one side, they chart a quick reduction of the state sector from 57 to 47 percent of Gross Domestic Product and support entry into the Common Market. Yet on the other, the party advocates some increases in state expenditure, when either a special community is being "unjustly hurt" (forty thousand old Swedish pensioners living below the "existence minimum") or when Swedish folk culture is at stake (the party would double Sweden's cultural budget for support of national museums, folk art, and Swedish music). In line with its regionalist origins, the party also seeks to devolve power from Stockholm to the provinces and local communities.

New Democracy has staked out an "anti-politician" politics. By intent, only four of their 25 Riksdag members come out of the public sector (in comparison, 90 percent of Social Democratic and 75 percent of Moderate riksdagsmen do). Wachtmeister uses elephants to symbolize the existing power centers in Sweden, and small, busy creatures to represent the insurgency of New Democracy. "Five ants outnumber four elephants," reads one party slogan.

Where the other major Swedish parties are overtly ideological, New Democracy is eclectic and opportunistic. New ideas can enjoy a rapid rise, unhindered by a fixed bureaucracy or a heavy institutional history. In late February, for example, the party announced a new reform program for sickness insurance, one devised by two private personnel directors, and one more logical and economical than the government alternative. To gasps of horror, New Democrat Anne Sorenson recently denounced in the Riksdag the goal of "gender equality" as a distraction for real women with real problems. She is also drafting the party's new family policy program, predicated on a general reduction in taxation (so a family can live on one income), family tax relief in place of existing child allowances, and a clampdown on bureaucratic "social investigations" of families.

Near the end of my stay, I attended New Democracy's Party Congress, an event normally held once every three years. This "extra" meeting was designed to bring some organizational coherence to a movement still in its infancy. About 750 delegates gathered on the ridge overlooking Skövde, a mixed crowd in terms of age, but predominantly male (much as New Democracy's voters have been). These weren't the yuppie Stockholmers

of the Moderate Party. They were, by and large, the lumpen-bourgeoisie, resembling the attendees at a Kiwanis convention in Indiana. The assembly exuded energy and excitement, and talk of winning 20 percent of the vote in the 1994 elections. Party members clearly see the Swedish establishment on the run, where a combination of protest and prescription just might do the trick. Also present, though, were signs of the tensions that dog any populist campaign. The session opened with a 90-minute dialogue by "Bert and Ian" designed in large part to quiet local party officials seeking more policy authority at the "grass roots." The Count and the businessman warned that the party must not lose its focus on issues of concern to the voters, by wasting energy on endless reorganizations. Tensions also surfaced between the party's "more respectable" elements and the "red-necks." A surprising number of physicians, for example, are found in New Democracy; one of their number, Johan Brohult, a professor of medicine at Stockholm University, serves as vice-chairman of the parliamentary group. Bound into the national medical service, Swedish doctors are paid at the level of a well-tenured nurse in the United States, and are understandably restless. Yet they are also uncomfortable with the "Svensson" (i.e., "Archie Bunker") character of some party comrades. Several that I talked to apologized in whispers for the "crazies" in the party, saying that it would take several years to weed them out.

The greatest danger to New Democracy's future may be the mixed blessing of being co-opted by the Moderates. Already, several of the more popular party ideas advanced last September have been absorbed by the ruling coalition. This has challenged the party to be always one step ahead of the government, pushing the Moderates and their allies ever rightward (and occasionally leftward), always staking out new policy terrain. Helpful, in this regard, has been the hysterical hostility of the Liberals to New Democracy. The former group, headed by old pol Bengt Westerberg, regularly denounces the New Democrats as "racists." Indeed, it was Westerberg's moralistic posturing that kept New Democracy out of the coalition government. In fact, this was the finest gift he could give them: the Center-Right government survives only as it attracts New Democratic votes in the Riksdag, but the party bears no responsibility for

governmental errors, and can freely criticize when it suits its purposes. "Power without responsibility" is not a bad posture for a populist party, but it is one unlikely to last beyond this Riksdag's three-year term. Over the long run, New Democracy's leaders look toward a true "right-wing" government in Sweden. If they can double their vote to 14 percent, a coalition of the Moderates, the Christian Democrats, and New Democracy might just be possible.

Near the end of my visit, news from America shook up everyone: Pat Buchanan had taken nearly 40 percent in New Hampshire; George Bush was wounded. Business leaders and the Moderates were deeply distressed. Believers in a New World Order resting on Bush-Baker internationalism, the Common Market, and the World Bank, they saw one of the legs of their vision wobbling. Swedish media commentators, however, quickly reassured them that New Hampshire was a fluke, and that Buchanan couldn't possibly repeat his success in another state. After all, George Bush had won the war in the Gulf and right-wing populism has no staying power. Only time will tell.

Allan Carlson is president of The Rockford Institute.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

A Sense of Place

Some people, mostly Southerners and geographers, like to argue about how you can tell whether you're in the South. This discourse (if you'll excuse the expression) can be more or less serious. My friend Vince Staten, for instance, once ran up a major phone bill calling restaurants on the Interstate to see how far north you can get grits for breakfast.

But some heavyweight scholarship has been devoted to the question, too. A Penn State geographer named Wilbur Zelinsky, for example, has compiled some great maps that show where people start painting their barns (roughly the same place where they once began to farm with horses instead of mules, just north of the old National Road through Ohio,

Indiana, and Illinois). Zelinsky has also looked to see where creeks stop being called that (or branches, or runs) and become brooks. (If you see the word "brook" in a Southern place-name, you can be sure the real-estate developers have been at work.)

This game can go on and on, and often does. Literally hundreds of criteria have been suggested, from kudzu to sweetened ice tea. My own contribution has been to look at phone books to see where people name businesses "Southern" or "Dixie" something-or-other. (Turns out there are a lot of hairdressers named Dixie, but I didn't count them.) My theory, if you can call it that, is that folks outside the South don't do this much.

The phone-book test works remarkably well, which is to say that it confirms my prejudices—like the one that says southern Florida, northern Virginia, and western Texas are only marginally Southern, these days. If it hadn't worked, though, I'd have scrapped the technique and stuck with the prejudices. After all, some of us just *know* when we leave the South.

It seems that, just like folks with acute sensitivity to light or noise, some people have a hypertrophic sense of place. Southerners may be especially vulnerable to this inflammation, but it's not just another regional malady, like hookworm or pellagra. Here's an Englishwoman, for instance, Jessica Mitford:

On the train, through Kentucky. There's already a marked change of atmosphere. The women on the train seem to travel in Sears catalogue dreamy date dresses. One is wearing a beige silk sheath, spangled semi-transparent top, high-heeled simulated glass slippers. She's a great kidder. The conductor, checking on reservations, just asked her, "Are you Mrs. Jennie Lee Kelley?" She answered, "Can't you see I am, by my browbeaten look?" Shrieks of laughter from all, especially her fat husband. . . . Lovely pale green, lush country outside. . . . In a Louisville hotel: already the punctuation and spelling are breaking down. A brochure in my room says, "Derby Lounge. Stall's are named and portray famous derby winners . . ." and also, "YE-OLE KENTUCKIE BREAKFEASTE." Why the hyphen?

Borrowed from you-all?

This is exactly the sort of alertness I experience from the moment I get off the plane at Newark. All sorts of everyday things take on special significance when they're *northern* things. My wife finds this ironic: she says she can move the furniture or get a new hairstyle and I won't notice for months. Maybe so (I haven't noticed), but put me in a new place and by God I *pay attention*.

A while back I wrote that when I used to drive north to college on old U.S. 11, chronic heartburn always set in about Hagerstown, Maryland, and it let up about the same place when I headed south. A book reviewer picked that out as an example of my "characteristic exaggeration," but—as God is my witness—it's the literal truth. What's more, my buddy Jake read the review and wrote to say that the same thing always happened to him somewhere around Newcastle, Delaware.

Jake also sent along a photocopied page from *The Web and the Rock*. As usual, Thomas Wolfe does go on, but he's worth quoting at length:

George would later remember all the times when he had come out of the South into the North, and always the feeling was the same—an exact, pointed, physical feeling marking the frontiers of his consciousness with a geographic precision. There was a certain tightening in the throat, a kind of dry, hard beating of the pulse, as they came up in the morning toward Virginia; a kind of pressure at the lips, a hot, hard burning in the eye, a wire-taut tension of the nerves, as the brakes slammed on, the train slowed down to take the bridge, and the banks of the Potomac River first appeared. Let them laugh at it who will, let them mock it if they can. It was a feeling sharp and physical as hunger, deep and tightening as fear. It was a geographic division of the spirit that was sharply, physically exact, as if it had been cleanly severed by a sword. When the brakes slammed on and he saw the wide flood of the Potomac River, . . . he drew in hot and hard and sharp upon his breath, there in the middle of the river. He ducked his head a little

as if he was passing through a web. He knew that he was leaving South [sic]. His hands gripped hard upon the hinges of his knees, his muscles flexed, his teeth clamped tightly, and his jaws were hard. The train rolled over, he was North again.

Hard and sharp and hot and taut—"Every young man from the South has felt this precise and formal geography of the spirit," Wolfe claims, "this tension of the nerves, . . . this gritting of the teeth and hardening of the jaws, this sense of desperate anticipation."

Well, all I feel is indigestion, but the point is that Wolfe gets it right about something physical happening to Southern boys—some of us, anyway—when we leave the South. We're sort of human dowsing rods for Southernness. If you want to map the region, maybe you could just point us north and draw the Rolaid line.

* * *

By the way, although I think Jake and I respond—OK, maybe over-respond—to real regional differences, something else was going on with Wolfe's young Southerners. They were reacting not just to real differences—strange accents, strange foods, strange-looking people—but to *expected* ones, expectations nurtured by their own needs and imaginations. "They felt they were invading a foreign country," Wolfe writes; "they were steeling themselves for conflict [and] looking forward with an almost desperate apprehension to their encounter with the city." ("Desperate anticipation" and "desperate apprehension" in the same paragraph, but that's old Tom for you.) "They were also looking forward to that encounter with exultancy and hope, with fervor, passion, and high aspiration."

"Not me," Jake wrote in the margin. Well, not me, either. But for a certain sort of dreamy young Southerner the north—New York City in particular—has always had a special fascination, from afar. Listen to Doug Marlette, the Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist who draws "Kudzu." A few years ago, when he moved from Georgia to the Big Apple, Marlette felt obliged to explain himself to his Southern friends and neighbors. "New York's energy, excitement and vitality have always attracted me," he wrote. "It's the show—the cultural vortex of the race, the storm center of human achievement."

And, he continued, "it holds a special place in the dreamscapes of my youth and the mythic underpinnings of my budding ambition." Marlette recalled how his image of The City came to be:

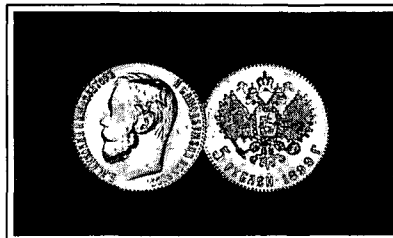
As a child growing up in small towns in North Carolina and Mississippi, I visited New York and studied its environs only from television, movies, books, and magazines. The media initiated me into the secrets, mysteries, and allures of the city.

I learned about Macy's from *Miracle on 34th Street*. I knew that Rob and Laura Petrie on the *Dick Van Dyke Show* lived in suburban New Rochelle. The offices of *Mad* magazine were located on Lexington Avenue. They made fun of ad-men on Madison Avenue.

Those places and frames of reference were as much a part of the geographies of my imagination as were Judea and Samaria from my Sunday school lessons or Vicksburg and Chancellorsville from my history books. And I imbued those alien landscapes and cultures with a vitality and reality that seemed achingly absent from my own.

Many young Southerners have felt that way, responding less to actual places than to their *ideas* of those places—ideas that may be little more than stereotypes. But there's an irony here. When people do that, they can help to create the facts they've imagined. New York's an exciting place, in part, because it's full of young provincials who have gone there for its excitement. I think of four guys I grew up with in East Tennessee. One is gay, and last I heard was in Los Angeles, doing what I don't know. Another is a Unitarian minister in a classic New England small town. The third is an avant-garde professor of French at an Ivy League university. And the fourth lives in Marin County, where he sells motorcycles and computers, caters Japanese food, and gives instruction in some heretical offshoot of Roling. Notice that by doing what they want in settings where it's a conventional thing to do, my friends are contributing to the persistence of regional differences: making New England look more like my stereotype of New England, California more like my idea of California. And by leaving the South they have contributed to the relative

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absence here of gay, sushi-eating, Unitarian post-structuralists.

Incidentally, I don't know what happened, but Doug Marlette recently moved again, from New York to North Carolina. He's my neighbor now, just up the road in Hillsborough, and if he has explained that move in print, I haven't seen it. Maybe he feels no explanation is necessary.

John Shelton Reed lived for ten years in Massachusetts and New York, but now writes from Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Letter From Cleveland

by Henry Precht

A Tale of Two Cities

Visits in the space of ten days to Toronto, Ontario, and then Tifton, Georgia, demand reflective analysis for stronger reasons than the compelling force of alliteration. The city and the town are so different that the visitor to both is driven to look for the faintest similarities. Once that effort is made, however, sweeping conclusions are revealed to guide us against repeating past mistakes in the

future of cities like our Cleveland. My wife and I traveled to these distant places for good but irrelevant reasons; it's what we saw, tasted, and heard that counted.

When boosters speak of the great features of Cleveland, they tell us of the museums, Browns, orchestra, theaters, ballet, and ethnic diversity. They never mention the one great advantage we hold over most other American cities: we're close to Canada. In Canadian seasons there are forests and lakes for the rough and ready and Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake festivals for the cultivated. But, year around, 35 minutes away by air, there's Toronto. It is, in two words, an "urban lesson" for all of us who live to its south.

The first thing you notice about Toronto is that it is *clean* in a way that we have forgotten was once true of American cities. Since there is no army of street sweepers in sight, the probable explanation is that people don't throw their trash on the streets. Moreover, the streets are free of human detritus, although the statisticians tell us that somewhere in this city of 3.2 million there are fifty thousand homeless. (Not surprising when the apartment vacancy rate is also about .1 percent.) Why the absence of waste—material and spiritual? Can Canadians simply be more considerate or are they laggards in developing a post-industrial, consumerist society? Let's look further on the city streets.

The second thing you observe, lifting your eyes from the pavement, is that there are fewer police and, even after work, more people than you will ever see in most downtowns south of the border. One reason, you learn, is that there is so little crime. Metropolitan Toronto, half the size of Chicago, has less than one-tenth the homicides and robberies. Philadelphia, larger by half a million, has five times the homicides and over three times the robberies. Useful facts for planning your urban vacation.

Walking around downtown, you are soon taken by a third fact. The city is a treat for the eyes and intellect. There are great, handsome towers of modern business and finance. And, in the same neighborhoods, there are public buildings from the past and blocks and blocks of small shops, restaurants, and businesses. Most of these seem to have one feature in common: they are owned by real people rather than corporate chains.

Development and growth came relatively late to Toronto; the city missed

the opportunity to have its structures regularly destroyed and replaced. But there is much that is new and equally attractive that is hidden from view. If you're driven off the streets by the cold, you can walk literally for miles underground past the same kinds of small shops and eateries.

The diversity in structures is rich and enriching; the mix of peoples offers an even superior celebration. Toronto is a city where different communities are valued and distinct, yet fully part of its life. Indian, Hungarian, Afghan, and Ethiopian restaurants are all supported by their communities as well as by outsiders. A Mandarin channel is a fixture on TV for the eighty thousand Chinese. Crucially, the ethnic communities are knit together by a superb urban transport system.

An Iranian émigré to the city told me, "We are made to feel at home here in a way you Americans can't conceive. You would want us to adapt to your ways; here we keep our own while taking from them as we like. Best of all, Canadians make us feel we are needed—and it may even be true."

In Tifton, Georgia, no ethnics appear in this small Southern town except blacks and whites (with a red-neck subsection). If you've driven Route 75, that straight shot from Atlanta to Florida, you've passed just outside Tifton. You probably never knew it. Few outsiders take the exit and drive the few miles east from the highway.

Like a medieval town with elaborate defenses protecting its perimeter, Tifton is masked along the invasion side by a system of spectacular "offenses." Half-mile high neon signs invite you to spend \$15.65 for a room or to eat in America's most popular fast-food places. It seems an impenetrable wall of bright colors, almost audible in their assault on the senses.

Behind this cacophony and the more traditional inner ring of auto dealers is Tifton. The suburbs seem little changed over the town's hundred years of history: run-down places for the blacks on one side, prosperous homes for whites on the other. But it is the "historic center" that we want to see. It speaks of a town that will not die. Years ago this center of "the nation's richest agricultural area" boasted three large hotels, mills, warehouses, and train connections everywhere. But the population sank to ten thousand, the mills closed, and the hotels lost out to the highway motels.

Now, somehow, the population has risen to twenty-two thousand. One sur-

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viving hotel has become the city hall, another an antique shop; one railroad station is the Chamber of Commerce, the other a garden center and farmers' market. A cotton warehouse has become a row of shops, an aerobic center, and a bakery. Mainstreet stores are all in business. An industrial zone has attracted some new plants including, recently, the first Japanese manufacturer to come to south Georgia.

We surveyed the area's ethnic foods as we had in Toronto—meaning, in Tifton, the barbecue and catfish places. But first we sampled the opinions of local gourmets (e.g., the public library staff, a pawnshop owner, members of a wedding party). In our final rankings, our findings coincided exactly with the judgments of these resident experts (who might, of course, have been cousins of the owners). First place for barbecue easily went to a former filling station carryout run by two black men with a single table under a pecan tree in the back. The worst in all categories (sandwich, Brunswick stew, cole slaw) was a regional chain. The best catfish was at a packed, locally owned seafood place with no frills, meaning no tablecloth.

On the opposite side of the highway is the "Agrirama," Tifton's attraction for tourists, most of whom seemed to be from around Tifton. It is a collection of antique farm cabins, schools, barns, mills, and businesses, all of which are being operated by old folks who grew up keeping house, milling corn, grinding cane, sawing logs, or dispensing sodas.

These Georgia buildings have a peculiar architecture. You won't see them outside the region, but you can still see the same cabins and barns on back roads. Tiftoners come to inspect this "living museum," I expect, not for nostalgia, but because those country buildings, like the others in "historic Tifton," make them feel proud about structures, a physical context that sets them apart from other people. It gives them a sense of identity, of belonging to some place—though certainly not one of them would describe his motivation in that highfalutin way.

So how is it these two very different places are such successful, happy, good places to live? We knew the answers before we went (and you did before reading this far). But we saw the two principles stark and plain before us, nine hundred miles apart.

First, architecture counts. Worthy buildings, especially those preserved from the

past, provide the primary structure for civic consciousness. People don't throw trash or commit crimes so freely in a city they care about. They are encouraged to behave as if they were in a museum, place of worship, or their own house. Even the dullest of us has some aesthetic feeling, and a sense of pride or self-respect comes from being part of a handsome physical continuity. It's as if Cleveland had a winning football team every day of the year; we're all part of this larger, beautiful surround.

Most Americans have moved from somewhere else. Fine buildings create a community that welcomes, inducts, and implicitly sets a standard for conduct. Architecture sets a tone—inspiring, depressing, or numbing. Alas, the tone you hear in Cleveland's downtown is mostly discordant and destructive of public spirit.

A parking lot never turned anyone on; auto ignition is not the spark of life. There are blocks of ill-zoned land in Cleveland that deaden the passing soul because human life has been expelled from them. A city that disregards public pleasure and honors private profit in permitting wasteful destruction and banal construction will get the kind of self-preoccupied citizens it deserves. The money we save on cheaply designed public housing projects is spent many times over tending to the social ills those depressing structures help to create.

The second lesson also has to do with scale—not only of structures, but of enterprises. The person who serves food or goods has to have a stake in the process, if work is to bring the mutual satisfaction we used to know in this country. Corporate chains transform small enterprises into heavy bureaucracies—the kind we deplore in Washington. But because they are private and market-responsive—qualities we esteem—we don't seem to object to the subtle or blatant, but always powerful, ways they shape our lives.

It is a deadly figure, a finger of blame pointed at each patron, that one chain has sold 11 billion hamburgers. Think of the many thousands of little guys who were driven out of business in the process, how much creativity lost, how many sinews of the community were cut. It is precisely a revulsion against lack of choice, against sameness and massiveness and, above all, against control from above and outside that has produced the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. This social decay is happening

here: it is the slow, quiet demise of our traditional way of life.

Toronto and Tifton tell us that we do not need a revolution or nationally fatal sleeping sickness to free ourselves from homogenization and external control. The solution is at hand if the vision is clear. Preserve what is best in the physical city of the past. Preserve and nurture the small and indigenous entrepreneur. Celebrate diversity and keep it authentic and vital. A great city is neither a museum nor a theme park. People have lived well in cities like Cleveland before us. That great achievement demands our respect and our active emulation.

Henry Precht is a retired foreign service officer and the president of the Cleveland Council on World Affairs.

Letter From Arizona by Gregory McNamee

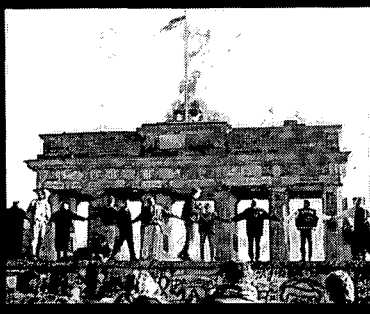
Empire of the Ants

"America," noted H.L. Mencken, "is a land so geographically tilted that every-

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thing which is loose rolls to California." In the last few years, however, it seems that most of the great untethered mass has run out of steam amid the cactus groves of nearby Arizona, known in these parts as the poor man's California and in any event just as open to whatever is both bizarre and lucrative.

The land abounds in evidence. Exhibit A is Arcosanti, an experimental community a hundred miles north of Phoenix. A garish bit of construction perched on a high plateau, it resembles nothing so much as an anthill, one that mixes the architectural sensibilities of Antonio Gaudi and Albert Speer. Paolo Soleri, the Italian designer and "visionary" who has made Arcosanti his lifework, has articulated over the years a weird sort of future world view that seems to go something like this: in the coming years, humankind will have despoiled the planet (a likely enough possibility) to the extent that we'll all be forced to live in hermetically sealed towers, our allotment a cubicle apiece, so small that it would make the good denizens of San Quentin riot in a second.

Armed with this unappealing vision of future shock, Soleri has been plugging away at his ziggurat for three decades now, aided by laborers who pay for the privilege of basking in his light. In that time, his complex has risen to a height of three stories, a mere 3 percent of its intended final mass. At this rate, his lifeboat—whence the buried "ark" in his project's name—will be completed at about the time the cockroaches inherit the planet, too late to do anyone any good.

Then came the New Age, that weird post-1960's concatenation of feel-good pop psychology, denatured Eastern religions, and general fuzziness. The whole

nation, I know, has been made to endure its have-a-nice-day excesses, but here in Arizona the New Age has become a real plague. Exhibit B: the formerly pleasant town of Sedona, in the red-rock country north of Phoenix beloved of Zane Grey, seems unaccountably to have become the international headquarters for levitators, meditators, and speculators. The latter soak the former by means of vastly inflated real estate values and avenues full of incense and crystal shops—incense and crystals being essential accoutrements for anyone who would channel an ancient Egyptian medium through his or her delicate psyche (or, in the case of a humanities professor at a nearby state university, who would channel such a spirit through a geranium). These are the folks who brought us the so-called Harmonic Convergence (in my circle it was known as the Moronic Convergence) a few years back. The planets of our solar system would fall into alignment, they claimed, on a certain bright autumn afternoon, and universal peace would reign over Earth. For whatever reason, it didn't happen.

Sedona is not the only Arizona town to suffer the creepy nontheologies of the New Agers; the poor Navajos and Hopis now have to ward off bus loads of gawking becrystallized visitors in search of the native American essence. Even Phoenix, that vast cow town to the south, the home of Barry Goldwater and the great laughingstock Evan Mecham, now overflows with Birkenstock-clad post-Blavatskyans. It all fits, I suppose, with our state's backwardness in so many ways.

And now to Exhibit C, the clincher. Thirty miles north of my hometown of Tucson, in the appropriately named hamlet of Oracle, the state's latest monument to kookiness is rising: Biosphere II, a stack

of glass-and-steel pyramids (of course) the size of three football fields. Within it lies a series of carefully constructed miniature ecosystems that mimic the natural processes of swamps, savannas, coral reefs, jungles, and deserts, inhabited by butterflies, bumblebees, and dwarf pigs.

But this is no petting zoo. Instead, Biosphere II is a prototype for a Martian space station, the decades-old dream of the cultists who run the place and who have long imagined a terrestrial future even bleaker than Paolo Soleri's. New Mexico communards in the 1960's (they appear in Dennis Hopper's film *Easy Rider*) since reorganized under the rubric "Institute of Biotechnics," the Biosphereans are, as one said, now "poking among the ruins of dying civilization" in order to seed the distant planets with their kind—handsome Caucasians who don't mind a steady diet of lentils and chanting, one supposes, given the makeup of the eight young men and women who have been locked inside the glass pyramid, where they are to remain until September of 1993 as a test of whether the microcosm is indeed self-sustaining. The truer test, I suspect, is whether eight adults can be penned up like deep-space sheep for two years without murdering one another.

The Biosphereans may be the cutting edge of the loopy New Age—at least they seem to think so—but they are real-world shrewd. Having extracted \$100 million from fellow cultist Edward Bass, a scion of America's fourth richest family, they have spent a great deal of capital and time cultivating such media as the *New York Times* and *National Geographic* to secure an image as reputable space scientists. Millions of taxpayer dollars now go into their coffers for unspecified research, while tens of thousands of tourists monthly descend on Biosphere II for a peek at the future, at a mere \$30-\$75 a pop.

The ghost of Nostradamus, the patron saint of pseudoscience, must be grinning from ear to ear. (Somebody please warn the Martians.) You won't see it in *Arizona Highways*, but this former refuge of cowboys and prospectors has been overrun by would-be Indians and latter-day space cadets who by all rights should be confined one state to the west. Anyone for a round of "Aum on the Range" before Exhibit D comes along?

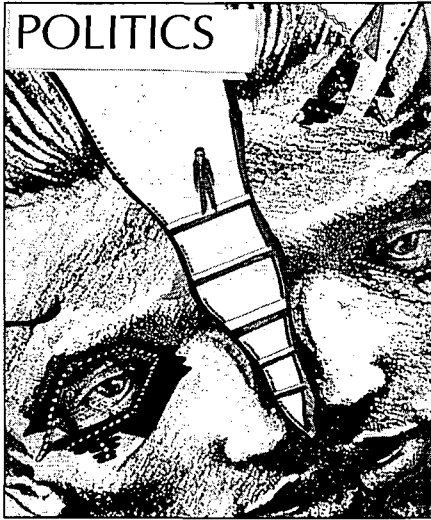
Gregory McNamee is a freelance writer and editor in Tucson, Arizona.

LIBERAL ARTS

BIOSCAM

The Biosphere II project near Tucson, Arizona, touted as a self-sufficient, closed scientific experiment, has been criticized as a "fraud and deception." As the Associated Press reported last January, the "mini-planet" sealed off last September was "stocked with food ahead of time" and since then "project sponsors have pumped in fresh air from outside." More serious allegations accuse crew member Jane Poynter of smuggling a duffel bag of supplies into the Biosphere upon her return from minor surgery performed outside the structure, and that the computer software used to monitor the experiment was "designed to permit tampering with data."

POLITICS



Anna Mycek-Wodnicki

Repudiating the National Debt

by Murray N. Rothbard

In the spring of 1981, conservative Republicans in the House of Representatives cried. They cried because, in the first flush of the Reagan Revolution that was supposed to bring drastic cuts in taxes and government spending, as well as a balanced budget, they were being asked by the White House and their own leadership to vote for an increase in the statutory limit on the federal public debt, which was then scraping the legal ceiling of one trillion dollars. They cried because all of their lives they had voted against an increase in public debt, and now they were being asked, by their own party and their own movement, to violate their lifelong principles. The White House and its leadership assured them that this breach in principle would be their last: that it was necessary for one last increase in the debt limit to give President Reagan a chance to bring about a balanced budget and to begin to reduce the debt. Many of these Republicans tearfully announced that they were taking this fateful step because they deeply trusted their President, who would not let them down.

Famous last words. In a sense, the Reagan handlers were right: there were no more tears, no more complaints, because

the principles themselves were quickly forgotten, swept into the dustbin of history. Deficits and the public debt have piled up mountainously since then, and few people care, least of all conservative Republicans. Every few years, the legal limit is raised automatically. By the end of the Reagan reign the federal debt was \$2.6 trillion; now it is \$3.5 trillion and rising rapidly. And this is the *rosy* side of the picture, because if you add in "off-budget" loan guarantees and contingencies, the grand total federal debt is \$20 trillion.

Before the Reagan era, conservatives were clear about how they felt about deficits and the public debt: a balanced budget was good, and deficits and the public debt were bad, piled up by free-spending Keynesians and socialists, who absurdly proclaimed that there was nothing wrong or onerous about the public debt. In the famous words of the left-Keynesian apostle of "functional finance," Professor Abba Lerner, there is nothing wrong with the public debt because "we owe it to ourselves." In those days, at least, conservatives were astute enough to realize that it made an enormous amount of difference whether—slicing through the obfuscatory collective nouns—one is a member of the "we" (the burdened taxpayer) or of the "ourselves" (those living off the proceeds of taxation).

Since Reagan, however, intellectual-political life has gone topsy-turvy. Conservatives and allegedly "free-market" economists have turned handsprings trying to find new reasons why "deficits don't matter," why we should all relax and enjoy the process. Perhaps the most absurd argument of Reaganomists was that we should not worry about growing public debt because it is being matched on the federal balance sheet by an expansion of public "assets." Here was a new twist on free-market macroeconomics: things are going well because the value of government assets is rising! In that case, why not have the government nationalize all assets outright? Reaganomists, indeed, came up with every conceivable argument for the public debt *except* the phrase of Abba Lerner, and I am convinced that they did not recycle that phrase because it would be difficult to sustain with a straight face at a time when *foreign* ownership of the national debt is skyrocket-

ing. Even apart from foreign ownership, it is far more difficult to sustain the Lerner thesis than before; in the late 1930's, when Lerner enunciated his thesis, total federal interest payments on the public debt were one billion dollars; now they have zoomed to \$200 billion, the third largest item in the federal budget, after the military and Social Security: the "we" are looking ever shabbier compared to the "ourselves."

To think sensibly about the public debt, we first have to go back to first principles and consider debt in general. Put simply, a *credit transaction* occurs when C, the creditor, transfers a sum of money (say \$1,000) to D, the debtor, in exchange for a promise that D will repay C in a year's time the principal plus interest. If the agreed interest rate on the transaction is 10 percent, then the debtor obligates himself to pay in a year's time \$1,100 to the creditor. This repayment completes the transaction, which in contrast to a regular sale, takes place over time.

So far, it is clear that there is nothing "wrong" with private debt. As with any private trade or exchange on the market, both parties to the exchange benefit, and no one loses. But suppose that the debtor is foolish, gets himself in over his head, and then finds that he can't repay the sum he had agreed on? This, of course is a risk incurred by debt, and the debtor had better keep his debts down to what he can surely repay. But this is not a problem of debt alone. Any consumer may spend foolishly; a man may blow his entire paycheck on an expensive trinket and then find that he can't feed his family. So consumer foolishness is hardly a problem confined to debt alone. But there is one crucial difference: if a man gets in over his head and he can't pay, the creditor suffers too, because the debtor has failed to return the creditor's property. In a profound sense, the debtor who fails to repay the \$1,100 owed to the creditor has stolen property that belongs to the creditor; we have here not simply a civil debt, but a tort, an aggression against another's property.

In earlier centuries, the insolvent debtor's offense was considered grave, and unless the creditor was willing to "forgive" the debt out of charity, the debtor continued to owe the money plus accumulating interest, plus penalty for continu-

ing nonpayment. Often, debtors were clapped into jail until they could pay—a bit Draconian perhaps, but at least in the proper spirit of enforcing property rights and defending the sanctity of contracts. The major practical problem was the difficulty for debtors in prison to earn the money to repay the loan; perhaps it would have been better to allow the debtor to be free, provided that his continuing income went to paying the creditor his just due.

As early as the 17th century, however, governments began sobbing about the plight of the unfortunate debtors, ignoring the fact that the insolvent debtors had gotten themselves into their own fix, and they began to subvert their own proclaimed function of enforcing contracts. Bankruptcy laws were passed which, increasingly, let the debtors off the hook and prevented the creditors from obtaining their own property. Theft was increasingly condoned, improvidence was subsidized, and thrift was hobbled. In fact, with the modern device of Chapter 11, instituted by the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1978, inefficient and improvident managers and stockholders are not only let off the hook, but they often remain in positions of power, debt-free and still running their firms, and plaguing consumers and creditors with their inefficiencies. Modern utilitarian neoclassical economists see nothing wrong with any of this; the market, after all, “adjusts” to these changes in the law. It is true that the market can adjust to almost anything, but so what? Hobbling creditors means that interest rates rise permanently, to the sober and honest as well as the improvident; but why should the former be taxed to subsidize the latter? But there are deeper problems with this utilitarian attitude. It is the same amoral claim, from the same economists, that there is nothing wrong with rising crime against residents or storekeepers of the inner cities. The market, they assert, will adjust and discount for such high crime rates, and therefore rents and housing values will be lower in the inner-city areas. So everything will be taken care of. But what sort of consolation is *that*? And what sort of justification for aggression and crime?

In a just society, then, only voluntary forgiveness by creditors would let debtors off the hook; otherwise, bankruptcy laws are an unjust invasion of the property rights of creditors.

One myth about “debtors’ relief” is that debtors are habitually poor and creditors

rich, so that intervening to save debtors is merely a requirement of egalitarian “fairness.” But this assumption was never true: in business, the wealthier the businessman the more likely he is to be a large debtor. It is the Donald Trumps and Robert Maxwells of this world whose debts spectacularly exceed their assets. Intervention on behalf of debtors has generally been lobbied for by large businesses with large debts. In modern corporations, the effect of ever-tightening bankruptcy laws has been to hobble the creditor-bondholders for the benefit of the stockholders and the existing managers, who are usually installed by, and allied with, a few dominant large stockholders. The very fact that a corporation is insolvent demonstrates that its managers have been inefficient, and they should be removed promptly from the scene. Bankruptcy laws that keep prolonging the rule of existing managers, then, not only invade the property rights of the creditors; they also injure the consumers and the entire economic system by preventing the market from purging the inefficient and improvident managers and stockholders and from shifting the ownership of industrial assets to the more efficient creditors.

Not only that; in a recent law review article, Bradley and Rosenzweig have shown that the stockholders, too, as well as the creditors, have lost a significant amount of assets due to the installation of Chapter 11 in 1978. As they write, “if bondholders and stockholders are both losers under Chapter 11, then who are the winners?” The winners, remarkably but unsurprisingly, turn out to be the existing, inefficient corporate managers, as well as the assorted lawyers, accountants, and financial advisers who earn huge fees from bankruptcy reorganizations.

In a free-market economy that respects property rights, the volume of private debt is self-policed by the necessity to repay the creditor, since no Papa Government is letting you off the hook. In addition, the interest rate a debtor must pay depends not only on the general rate of time preference but on the degree of risk he as a debtor poses to the creditor. A good credit risk will be a “prime borrower,” who will pay relatively low interest; on the other hand, an improvident person or a transient who has been bankrupt before, will have to pay a much higher interest rate, commensurate with the degree of risk on the loan.

Most people, unfortunately, apply the same analysis to public debt as they do to

private. If sanctity of contracts should rule in the world of private debt, shouldn’t they be equally as sacrosanct in public debt? Shouldn’t public debt be governed by the same principles as private? The answer is no, even though such an answer may shock the sensibilities of most people. The reason is that the two forms of debt-transaction are totally different. If I borrow money from a mortgage bank, I have made a contract to transfer my money to a creditor at a future date; in a deep sense, he is the true owner of the money at that point, and if I don’t pay I am robbing him of his just property. But when *government* borrows money, it does not pledge its own money; its own resources are not liable. Government commits not *its own* life, fortune, and sacred honor to repay the debt, but *ours*. This is a horse, and a transaction, of a very different color.

For unlike the rest of us, government sells no productive good or service and therefore earns nothing. It can only get money by looting our resources through taxes, or through the hidden tax of legalized counterfeiting known as “inflation.” There are some exceptions, of course, such as when the government sells stamps to collectors or carries our mail with gross inefficiency, but the overwhelming bulk of government revenues is acquired through taxation or its monetary equivalent. Actually, in the days of monarchy, and especially in the medieval period before the rise of the modern state, kings got the bulk of their income from their private estates—such as forests and agricultural lands. Their debt, in other words, was more private than public, and as a result, their debt amounted to next to nothing compared to the public debt that began with a flourish in the late 17th century.

The public debt transaction, then, is very different from private debt. Instead of a low-time preference creditor exchanging money for an IOU from a high-time preference debtor, the government now receives money from creditors, both parties realizing that the money will be paid back not out of the pockets or the hides of the politicians and bureaucrats, but out of the looted wallets and purses of the hapless taxpayers, the subjects of the state. The government gets the money by tax-coercion; and the public creditors, far from being innocents, know full well that their proceeds will come out of that selfsame coercion. In short, public creditors are willing to hand over money

to the government now in order to receive a share of tax loot in the future. This is the opposite of a free market, or a genuinely voluntary transaction. Both parties are immorally contracting to participate in the violation of the property rights of citizens in the future. Both parties, therefore, are making agreements about other people's property, and both deserve the back of our hand. The public credit transaction is not a genuine contract that need be considered sacrosanct, any more than robbers parceling out their shares of loot in advance should be treated as some sort of sanctified contract.

Any melding of public debt into a private transaction must rest on the common but absurd notion that taxation is really "voluntary," and that whenever the government does anything, "we" are willingly doing it. This convenient myth was wittily and trenchantly disposed of by the great economist Joseph Schumpeter: "The theory which construes taxes on the analogy of club dues or of the purchases of, say, a doctor only proves how far removed this part of the social sciences is from scientific habits of mind."

Morality and economic utility generally go hand in hand. Contrary to Alexander Hamilton, who spoke for a small but powerful clique of New York and Philadelphia public creditors, the national debt is *not* a "national blessing." The annual government deficit, plus the annual interest payment that keeps rising as the total debt accumulates, increasingly channels scarce and precious private savings into wasteful government boondoggles, which "crowd out" productive investments. Establishment economists, including Reaganomists, cleverly fudge the issue by arbitrarily labeling virtually all government spending as "investments," making it sound as if everything is fine and dandy because savings are being productively "invested." In reality, however, government spending only qualifies as "investment" in an Orwellian sense; government actually spends on behalf of the "consumer goods" and desires of bureaucrats, politicians, and their dependent client groups. Government spending, therefore, rather than being "investment," is consumer spending of a peculiarly wasteful and unproductive sort, since it is indulged not by producers but by a parasitic class that is living off, and increasingly weakening, the productive private sector. Thus, we see that statistics are not in the least "scientific" or "value-free"; how data are classified—whether,

for example, government spending is "consumption" or "investment"—depends upon the political philosophy and insights of the classifier.

Deficits and a mounting debt, therefore, are a growing and intolerable burden on the society and economy, both because they raise the tax burden and increasingly drain resources from the productive to the parasitic, counterproductive, "public" sector. Moreover, whenever deficits are financed by expanding bank credit—in other words, by creating new money—matters become still worse, since credit inflation creates permanent and rising price inflation as well as waves of boom-bust "business cycles."

It is for all these reasons that the Jeffersonians and Jacksonians (who, contrary to the myths of historians, were extraordinarily knowledgeable in economic and monetary theory) hated and reviled the public debt. Indeed, the national debt was paid off twice in American history, the first time by Thomas Jefferson and the second, and undoubtedly the last time, by Andrew Jackson.

Unfortunately, paying off a national debt that will soon reach \$4 trillion would quickly bankrupt the entire country. Think about the consequences of imposing new taxes of \$4 trillion in the United States next year! Another way, and almost as devastating, a way to pay off the public debt would be to print \$4 trillion of new money—either in paper dollars or by creating new bank credit. This method would be extraordinarily inflationary, and prices would quickly skyrocket, ruining all groups whose earnings did not increase to the same extent, and destroying the value of the dollar. But in essence this is what happens in countries that hyper-inflate, as Germany did in 1923, and in countless countries since, particularly the

Third World. If a country inflates the currency to pay off its debt, prices will rise so that the dollars or marks or pesos the creditor receives are worth a lot less than the dollars or pesos they originally lent out. When an American purchased a 10,000 mark German bond in 1914, it was worth several thousand dollars; those 10,000 marks by late 1923 would not have been worth more than a stick of bubble gum. Inflation, then, is an underhanded and terribly destructive way of indirectly repudiating the public debt; destructive because it ruins the currency unit, which individuals and businesses depend upon for calculating all their economic decisions.

I propose, then, a seemingly drastic but actually far less destructive way of paying off the public debt at a single blow: outright debt repudiation. Consider this question: why should the poor, battered citizens of Russia or Poland or the other ex-Communist countries be bound by the debts contracted by their former Communist masters? In the Communist situation, the injustice is clear: that citizens struggling for freedom and for a free-market economy should be taxed to pay for debts contracted by the monstrous former ruling class. But this injustice only differs by degree from "normal" public debt. For, conversely, why should the Communist government of the Soviet Union have been bound by debts contracted by the Czarist government they hated and overthrew? And why should we, struggling American citizens of today, be bound by debts created by a past ruling elite who contracted these debts at *our* expense? One of the cogent arguments against paying blacks "reparations" for past slavery is that we, the living, were not slaveholders. Similarly, we the living did not contract for either the past or the

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present debts incurred by the politicians and bureaucrats in Washington.

Although largely forgotten by historians and by the public, repudiation of public debt is a solid part of the American tradition. The first wave of repudiation of state debt came during the 1840's, after the panics of 1837 and 1839. Those panics were the consequence of a massive inflationary boom fueled by the Whig-run Second Bank of the United States. Riding the wave of inflationary credit, numerous state governments, largely those run by the Whigs, floated an enormous amount of debt, most of which went into wasteful public works (euphemistically called "internal improvements"), and into the creation of inflationary banks. Outstanding public debt by state governments rose from \$26 million to \$170 million during the decade of the 1830's. Most of these securities were financed by British and Dutch investors.

During the deflationary 1840's succeeding the panics, state governments faced repayment of their debt in dollars that were now more valuable than the ones they had borrowed. Many states, now largely in Democratic hands, met the crisis by repudiating these debts, either totally or partially by scaling down the amount in "readjustments." Specifically, of the 28 American states in the 1840's, nine were in the glorious position of having no public debt, and one (Missouri's) was negligible; of the 18 remaining, nine paid the interest on their public debt without interruption, while another nine (Maryland, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida) repudiated part or all of their liabilities. Of these states, four defaulted for several years in their interest payments, whereas the other five (Michigan, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Florida) totally and permanently repudiated their entire outstanding public debt. As in every debt repudiation, the result was to lift a great burden from the backs of the taxpayers in the defaulting and repudiating states.

Apart from the moral, or sanctity-of-contract argument against repudiation that we have already discussed, the standard economic argument is that such repudiation is disastrous, because who, in his right mind, would lend again to a repudiating government? But the effective counterargument has rarely been considered: why *should* more private capital be poured down government rat holes? It is precisely the drying up of future

public credit that constitutes one of the main arguments *for* repudiation, for it means beneficially drying up a major channel for the wasteful destruction of the savings of the public. What we want is abundant savings and investment in private enterprises, and a lean, austere, low-budget, minimal government. The people and the economy can only wax fat and prosperous when their government is starved and puny.

The next great wave of state debt repudiation came in the South after the blight of Northern occupation and Reconstruction had been lifted from them. Eight Southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) proceeded, during the late 1870's and early 1880's under Democratic regimes, to repudiate the debt foisted upon their taxpayers by the corrupt and wasteful carpetbag Radical Republican governments under Reconstruction.

So what can be done now? The current federal debt is \$3.5 trillion. Approximately \$1.4 trillion, or 40 percent, is owned by one or another agency of the federal government. It is ridiculous for a citizen to be taxed by one arm of the federal government (the IRS), to pay interest and principal on debt owned by another agency of the federal government. It would save the taxpayer a great deal of money, and spare savings from further waste, to simply cancel that debt outright. The alleged debt is simply an accounting fiction that provides a mask over reality and furnishes a convenient means for mulcting the taxpayer. Thus, most people think that the Social Security Administration takes their premiums and accumulates it, perhaps by sound investment, and then "pays back" the "insured" citizen when he turns 65. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no insurance and there is no "fund," as there indeed must be in any system of *private* insurance. The federal government simply takes the Social Security "premiums" (taxes) of the young person, spends them in the general expenditures of the Treasury, and then, when the person turns 65, taxes someone else to pay the "insurance benefit." Social Security, perhaps the most revered institution in the American polity, is also the greatest single racket. It's simply a giant Ponzi scheme controlled by the federal government. But this reality is masked by the Social Security Administration's purchase of government bonds, the Treasury

then spending these funds on whatever it wishes. But the fact that the SSA has government bonds in its portfolio, and collects interest and payment from the American taxpayer, allows it to masquerade as a legitimate insurance business.

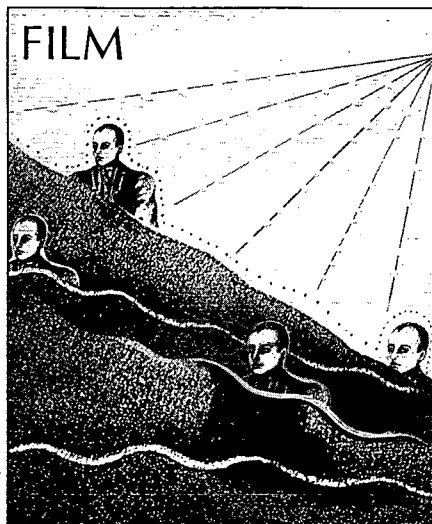
Canceling federal agency-held bonds, then, reduces the federal debt by 40 percent. I would advocate going on to repudiate the entire debt outright, and let the chips fall where they may. The glorious result would be an immediate drop of \$200 billion in federal expenditures, with at least the fighting chance of an equivalent cut in taxes.

But if this scheme is considered too Draconian, why not treat the federal government as any private bankrupt is treated (forgetting about Chapter 11)? The government is an organization, so why not liquidate the assets of that organization and pay the creditors (the government bondholders) a pro-rata share of those assets? This solution would cost the taxpayer nothing, and, once again, relieve him of \$200 billion in annual interest payments. The United States government should be forced to disgorge its assets, sell them at auction, and then pay off the creditors accordingly. What government assets? There are a great deal of assets, from TVA to the national lands to various structures such as the Post Office. The massive CIA headquarters at Langley, Virginia, should raise a pretty penny for enough condominium housing for the entire work force inside the Beltway. Perhaps we could eject the United Nations from the United States, reclaim the land and buildings, and sell them for luxury housing for the East Side gliterati. Another serendipity out of this process would be a massive privatization of the socialized land of the Western United States and of the rest of America as well. This combination of repudiation and privatization would go a long way to reducing the tax burden, establishing fiscal soundness, and desocializing the United States.

In order to go this route, however, we first have to rid ourselves of the fallacious mindset that conflates public and private, and that treats government debt as if it were a productive contract between two legitimate property owners.

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FILM



Star Turns

by David R. Slavitt

Bugsy

Produced by Mark Johnson
Written by James Toback
Directed by Barry Levinson
Released by Tri-Star Pictures

Meeting Venus

Produced by David Puttnam
Written by István Szabó and Michael Hirst
Directed by István Szabó
Released by Warner Brothers

Gangster movies show us an arc, the parabolic rise and fall of a career where ambition comes a-cropper, where there is payment extracted by the inexorable fates for the hubris of the protagonist. But in these terms, *Bugsy* is no gangster movie. Indeed, the closest comparison I can think of is *Tucker*, another film about the way America maltreats her visionaries. Benjamin (Bugsy—but not to his face) Siegel is a gangster, a business associate of Meyer Lansky and Charlie Luciano, but at the opening of the film he is already at the top, doing well, riding high, taking care of business and even bending the rules a little to accommodate minor failures of faith and trust of a nebbish old friend like Harry Greenberg. (Elliot Gould as Greenberg does his best work in movies in years.)

What brings Bugsy down isn't anything like the unwritten moral code, the risks implicit in a career of crime, or the im-

placability of the Fates and Furies. It's worse than that. He is ruined by real estate development. His creation—the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas—is a visionary enterprise, and that, according to James Toback's screenplay, is enough to bring down anyone—hero, anti-hero, or even ordinary human being. Had Siegel only stuck to his nasty last, he might have made out as well as Luciano (who went off to retirement in Sicily) or Lansky who lingered on for years in Miami. But the vulnerabilities of legitimate business are too great for him.

Not that Siegel is such an astute businessman. The costs of the Flamingo escalate from a million to three and then to six or so, of which sum Siegel's paramour, Virginia Hill, turns out to have skimmed a third. Ordinarily, Siegel would have noticed such speculation. It is dramatically demonstrated that he can do quick arithmetic without taking off his shoes and socks. But he is bemused not only by the woman but also by his own grand idea of what he can do to the huge open space of America. He is dazzled and dizzied by the possibility of legitimate profits that are all but beyond calculation.

It's a wry and rueful kind of joke for a large movie to be making, but movies get made for odd reasons and therefore can do improbable things—sometimes even well. Here, at least a few of the motives seem clear. Warren Beatty, one of the film's coproducers, wanted to be Bugsy Siegel, saw the part as right for him, indeed as irresistible. Annette Bening, Beatty's wife, plays Virginia Hill, and they have some lively scenes together—which surely didn't hurt. James Toback, the writer who also appears in a minor part, happens to be a compulsive gambler who has a thing about Las Vegas, a combined loathing and fascination that made the Siegel story numinous and inviting for him.

The great scene in the film is one in which Beatty stands alone in the Nevada desert and sees . . . nothing! All this nothing, waiting to be made into something. Mickey Cohen (Harvey Keitel) and Virginia Hill are watching from the road and just don't get it, because they see what's there, an expanse of arid land. Siegel sees past that to pure possibility. He sees what isn't there, and it is a grand and funny moment. We know how it will be, how the electric power from Hoover Dam will run air conditioning that will in turn enable Las Vegas to happen. We know then that Siegel's madness—his

"bugsiness"—is correct. But we can see more than Siegel does, for we realize that the convention of this kind of film requires him to die, and we also know that the Las Vegas he imagines is going to be tacky, shoddy, and as dreadful as it is wonderful.

A mark of the seriousness of this film is that it reminded me of Saul Bellow's remarkable novella, *The Bellarosa Connection*, in which there is a similar rhapsody to the contradictions of grandeur and sleaze that America perseverates. Bellow says of his almost eponymous Billy Rose that he "wasn't big: he was about the size of Peter Lorre. But oh! he was American. There was a penny-arcade jingle about Billy, the popping of shooting galleries, the rattling of pinballs, the weak human cry of the Times Square geckos, the lizard gaze of sideshow freaks. To see him as he was, you have to place him against the whitewash glare of Broadway in the wee hours. But even such places have their grandees—people whose defects can be converted to seed money for enterprises. There's nothing in this country that you can't sell, nothing too weird to bring to market and found a fortune on. And once you got as much major real estate as Billy had, then it didn't matter that you were one of the human deer that came uptown from the Lower East Side to graze on greasy sandwich papers."

Siegel, too, finds himself in a promised land he can't quite enter, or, worse, one that he ruins by entering. Beatty plays Siegel with a zest that never worries about the camera's candor. Risking unattractiveness, he manages to look coarse, in some shots like Jerry Orbach playing a villain. And he is all appetite. In one scene he humiliates an associate who has tried to swindle him, Meyer Lansky, and Charlie Luciano (not a good idea) and forces the man to get down on all fours, bark like a dog, grunt like a pig, and accept a shower of blows and insults. These exertions having whetted Siegel's appetite, he returns to the dinner table to wolf huge forkfuls of food—which is enough to arouse in turn Virginia Hill's passions, and she starts fondling and nibbling him. They sink down to the floor together, pulling the tablecloth down with them and upsetting the food.

Still, Siegel has aspirations toward refinement. He dresses well, even foppishly, can exert a sunny charm, and even alone is often engaged in peculiar projects of self-improvement, especially of his diction, so that at unlikely moments he per-

forms elocution exercises. ("Twenty dwarves took turns doing handstands on the carpet.") At first, these gestures seem to be mere jokes, but one gets the sense that the interior of Siegel, his mind and soul, are as vacant as Nevada. He is allowed or even required to imagine something, and the terrain seems in no way to limit what he can invent.

Siegel dies, but Las Vegas happens and is there, in the movie and in the world, someone's vision materialized, or, just as unsettling, our true natures revealed to us. The eminent Philadelphia architect, Robert Venturi, suggested in the late 70's in *Learning From Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* that we ought to give some serious thought to the buildings, signs, and all the tawdry glitz of that peculiar city. Barry Levinson, James Toback, and Warren Beatty, taking him at his word, have made an elegant, improbably witty, and darkly thoughtful film.

If America has its problems, though, Europe is hardly any paradise—or at least not according to what we gather from István Szabó's new film, *Meeting Venus*. In a few broad strokes, we get indications of the political, historical, and ethnic rivalries that make it all but impossible for reasonably intelligent and talented people to collaborate, say, on a production of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. Well, it's a simple enough premise, too easy and programmatic if anything, and a long list of sim-

ilar films comes immediately to mind, from *A Night at the Opera* to any of those show-biz morality plays in which the indomitable Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney put on a show ("We'll do it in the barn!").

In other words, I had my trepidations, going in. But since *Mephisto* I have been following István Szabó's work, and it has never been terrible. I was therefore willing to waste a couple of hours if, at the worst, I could pass the time looking at Glenn Close. She is terrific, gorgeous, and almost convincing as she lip-syncs to Kiri Te Kanawa's Elizabeth. She arrives at an opera house in Paris, and she and the conductor have an affair—of course. The conductor, Zoltan Szanto, is played by Niels Arestrup, and he is fine too, able to suggest intelligence and sensibility without being sappy, and with a kind of puppy-dog attractiveness. More important, Szabó's verve is altogether winning. The fluidity with which he gets us from inside his besieged conductor's head to external reality, and then just a bit beyond that, is a most gratifying technical achievement.

Once the not-very-complicated conceit of the film has been demonstrated in the first twenty minutes or so, the film can afford to relax and devote itself to having a good time. There are a variety of send-ups of the eccentricities of the members of the company and the crew. "The artists behave like bureaucrats, and the bu-

reaucrats behave like artists," somebody complains. The ingenue is voracious and ambitious. The paymaster—or perhaps it is a paymistress?—is monstrous and conspiratorial. The first tenor is a petty crook as much interested in automobile parts as in opera. The second tenor is a dun-drethead. The choreographer is predictably perverse. The sets are aggressively modern and displeasing. Worst of all, the management is manipulative and the unions are absolutely Kafka-esque. Szanto attempts to negotiate his way, among these obstacles, talking all the time about dedication to the music, and to Wagner, but he is speaking a language nobody seems to understand.

At this point, where we are engaged but hardly transported, Glenn Close makes her appearance as the perhaps-just-a-little-bit-aging soprano, and she takes the film into her own expressive hands. Szabó and the movie are home free from here on. The love affair may not be altogether a surprise, and the setup is obvious, but there is a sense of fun, an inventiveness, a mastery to which we yield quite cheerfully. In one extraordinary shot, a Close close-up, for a few beats, nothing happens. She is just reacting to a silence on the part of the conductor, a failure on his part to answer a question she has asked. And we watch her as, without saying anything, and hardly even moving a muscle, she goes in thirty seconds or so from adoration to apprehension, to dismay, to rage . . .

Brilliant! Brava! Go see this!

Meanwhile, what happens with the story?

What can they do that isn't trite or banal or insultingly stupid? The question, in more practical terms, is how to indicate the salvation of the production, how to show an aesthetic and even moral triumph, and do this in visual terms. We can't trust our ears, after all, because anyone old enough to go to such a film understands that it's dubbed. We have to see a moment of grace.

In an elegant piece of business, this is just what happens. For just a few frames at the appropriate moment of the performance, Szanto's baton bursts into bloom—like the pilgrim's staff in the opera! Another triumph!

For that thirty-second shot of Glenn Close and then this splendid bit at the end, which I suppose is Szabó's, *Meeting Venus* is a must.

David R. Slavitt is a poet and novelist who lives in Philadelphia.

LIBERAL ARTS



FRAT EQUALS COED

Bowdoin College officials have voted to ban fraternities and sororities "that exclude students because of gender," reported the *Maine Sunday Telegram* last March. Scott W. Hood, a spokesman for the college, said the resolution "prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, gender or sexual preference" in keeping with a "fully co-educational" environment. Chi Psi president Brian C. Hawkin draws the line at admitting women and plans to fight the ban on "same-sex fraternities" that goes into effect September 1993.

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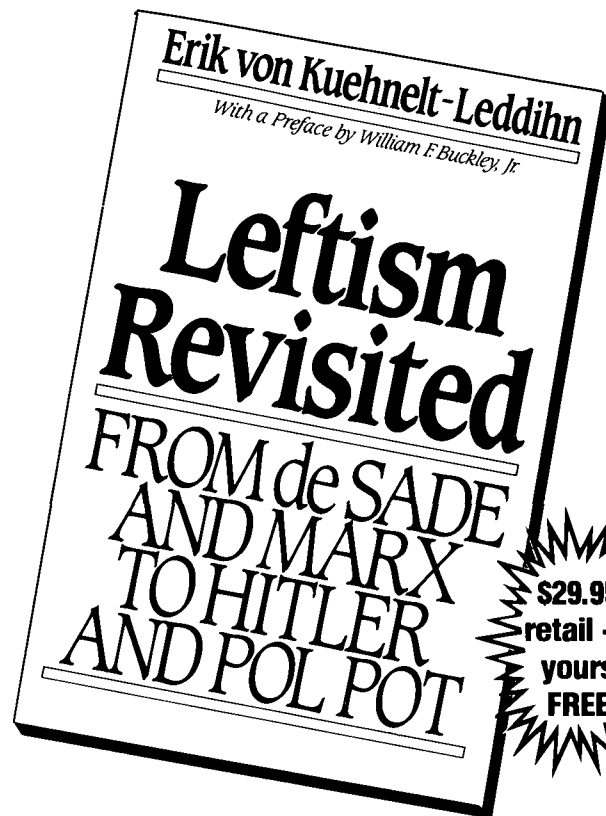
"Communism isn't the enemy," observed Malcolm Muggeridge. "Liberalism is the enemy."

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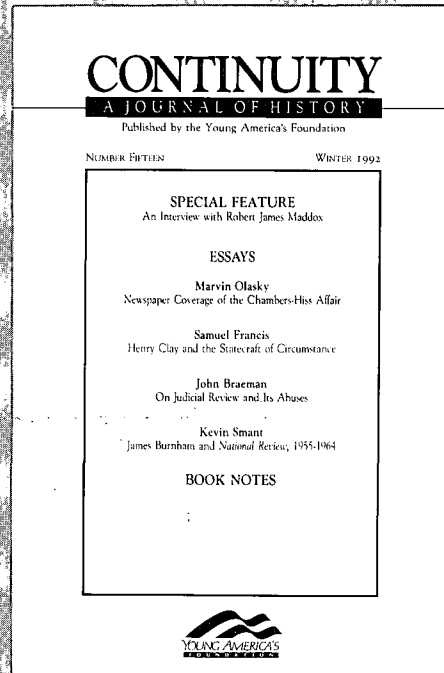
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